

The narcolepsy sleeping disorder

[Health & Medicine](#), [Sleep Disorders](#)



Narcolepsy is a chronic sleeping disorder with no sure cause. The main characteristic is excessive and over daytime sleepiness, even after a good nights rest. A person with narcolepsy will usually be very drowsy or fall asleep, particularly at unappropriate times and places. Daytime attacks may or may not occur without any warning (This is a personal account of someone with Narcolepsy that I found on the ScienceNews website) My problems started in the fall of 1954 when football practice began just before school started. I would be so exhausted after practice that I could barely make it home.

Upon doing so I would lay down on the floor and go to sleep. I knew that something was seriously wrong with me and there wasn't anyway that I could play football. The previous year I was a starter on the varsity team. The next ten years were very difficult for me. Doctor after doctor made diagnoses that were wrong. People around you think that you are lazy, sleep all the time, you have no interest in anything and worst of all, you begin to think you are worthless and lazy. During this ten years, I have had sleep attacks while driving a car. When I would awaken, I would have traveled 20 or 30 miles and not remember a thing.

I have gone to sleep on my feet while working and standing still. I would go to the bathroom just to be able to close my eyes for a short period of time. I would use cigarettes as a timer. You can light a cigarette and slide it between your fingers down toward your palm, different lengths to adjust the time. When the cigarette burns down toward your fingers How I found out what was wrong with me! There was an article in a magazine which came with the Sunday paper. When I read the article, I immediately knew that I

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had found the answer to my problem. The next morning I went to the local Doctor and asked him if he had read the article.

He responded that he had, but the symptoms would fit just about everyone in town. I told him he might be right, but how many people did he know have their knees buckle or lose control of their neck when they laughed, got mad, or were surprised. I asked if he would write a prescription for Ritalin. When I took my first pill of Ritalin, it was the first time I had felt any source of energy for over 10 years. I am now 61 years old and I am from a time when the workplace was very different from today. Management did not take the time, nor were they required to try to understand disabilities.

If a company found out that you were a narcoleptic, they would terminate you, because they were afraid you would hurt someone else in the work place. I worked as a professional mechanic for 20 years and then worked in the gas industry on the retail level for another 22 years. I have not had an accident of any kind as a result of my narcolepsy. It seems as though subconsciously, I knew when I was in danger and would always wake up. My advice to anyone that has had a proper diagnosis as to their narcolepsy is the following. Get to know thy self, be aware and study what effects your behavior when this or that happens.

Symptoms typically appear during adolescence, although the disease itself may not be diagnosed for many years afterward. The primary symptom is an overwhelming feeling of fatigue, together with sleep attacks that may occur with or without warning. About 75% of patients also experience cataplexy, a sudden loss of muscle tone lasting a few seconds to 30 minutes, but without

loss of consciousness. Episodes of narcolepsy can be triggered by emotions such as laughter, fear, or anger. Other symptoms include sleep paralysis and hypnagogic hallucinations as the person wakes up or falls asleep.

Some patients may also have trouble staying asleep at Recent research suggests that the cause of narcolepsy maybe involves a dead patch of cells in your brain, in dogs and mice they have found this patch of dead cells that they have verified causes narcolepsy to these animals. The exact cell pattern has not been identified in humans, and scientists say we may find the source in as close to 2 years with good research. Twin studies suggest that narcolepsy is not definitely a genetic disease, since only 25% of the time will both twins have the condition. The risk for a person whose immediate relative has narcolepsy is only about 1-2%.

This baffles doctors because narcolepsy can show up out of nowhere, but also may run in the family, but not always. The treatment for narcolepsy usually involves taking medications to reduce sleepiness during the day and in those who have cataplexy, other medications to prevent cataplexy. The medications to prevent sleep during the day are a group of medicines called stimulants that includes Ritalin, Adderall, Dexedrine, Provigil and others. Cataplexy is usually treated with antidepressant medications that repress REM (dreaming) sleep such as Tofranil, Norpramin, Prozac, Paxil and Zoloft.

Narcolepsy can be diagnosed easily when all the symptoms are present. Two tests are usually done to verify the diagnosis. These tests are usually done by a sleep doctor. The polysomnogram records your brain waves when you sleep in the night, and once you go into REM (Rapid Eye Movement) if the

brain waves look the same then this helps in diagnosis. With the multiple latency test people are to do an activity they regularly do any other day and every 2 hours the doctors tell them if they feel drowsy that they should try to sleep etc.

I have also read though that doctors usually won't diagnose narcolepsy easily, in many stories like the one above, people say that doctors said that they had anything but narcolepsy. Narcolepsy usually can show up as many things, doctors usually at first call it a lack of sleep, and other times they may say that you I learned a lot from this report. Before I did this report I thought that narcolepsy was just always being tired and sometimes taking a nap during the day, but I was wrong. I think narcolepsy would be a very aggravating and embarrassing disease.