



Narcolepsy in Adult Patients: **Symptoms of Narcolepsy**

Symptoms of Narcolepsy

- Narcolepsy is a **chronic and lifelong neurologic disorder** of sleep-wake state instability characterized by excessive daytime sleepiness (EDS) and abnormal manifestations of REM sleep¹⁻³
- Evaluating narcolepsy in the clinical setting can be difficult.^{1,4,5} **Patients may not always accurately report their symptoms** because they may be unaware of the symptoms themselves, including their impact or relationship to sleep^{5,6}
- Although EDS is a core symptom of narcolepsy, **continuous assessment of all symptoms is crucial for a comprehensive evaluation**^{1,5,6}

1. American Academy of Sleep Medicine. *International Classification of Sleep Disorders*. 3rd ed, text revision. American Academy of Sleep Medicine; 2023. **2.** Thorpy M, Morse AM. *Sleep Med Clin*. 2017;12(1):61-71. **3.** Thorpy MJ, Bogan RK. *Sleep Med*. 2020;68:97-109. **4.** Overeem S. In: Baumann CR, Bassetti CL, Scammell TE, eds. *Narcolepsy: Pathophysiology, Diagnosis, and Treatment*. Springer-Verlag New York; 2011:283-290. **5.** Thorpy MJ, Dauvilliers Y. *Sleep Med*. 2015;16(1):9-18. **6.** Overeem S et al. *Sleep Med Clin*. 2012;7(2):263-281.

Excessive Daytime Sleepiness (EDS)

EDS is the core symptom of narcolepsy and often the most debilitating^{1,2}

- It can cause obvious changes in wakefulness, such as brief lapses into sleep^{1,3,4}
- Most patients awaken feeling refreshed after a sleep episode but begin to feel sleepy shortly thereafter¹
- EDS can also express itself in less obvious ways^{2,3}

Even when seemingly awake, patients with narcolepsy may not feel completely alert.^{1,3,5} They often experience **issues with attention or memory, poor decision-making, and trouble following a conversation**^{2,3}

1. American Academy of Sleep Medicine. *International Classification of Sleep Disorders*. 3rd ed, text revision. American Academy of Sleep Medicine; 2023.

2. Ahmed IM, Thorpy MJ. In: Thorpy MJ, Billiard M, eds. *Sleepiness: Causes, Consequences and Treatment*. Cambridge University Press; 2011:36-47. **3.** Thorpy M, Morse AM. *Sleep Med Clin*. 2017;12(1):61-71. **4.** Overeem S et al. *Sleep Med Clin*. 2012;7(2):263-281. **5.** Nishino S. *Sleep Med*. 2007;8(4):373-399.

More to Know About EDS

All patients with narcolepsy experience EDS, or the inability to stay awake and alert during the day resulting in periods of irrepressible need for sleep or unexpected bouts of drowsiness or sleep¹

- EDS can make it **especially difficult to stay awake in sedentary situations**, such as riding in a car, and can make it difficult for patients to focus or stay present mentally at work or in social situations¹
- EDS in narcolepsy can also cause changes in wakefulness^{2,3}
 - Patients with narcolepsy may experience brief lapses into sleep, called microsleep episodes, and unplanned naps^{1,3-5}
 - These sleep episodes can happen while engaged in other activities like eating or walking¹

EDS, excessive daytime sleepiness.

1. American Academy of Sleep Medicine. *International Classification of Sleep Disorders*. 3rd ed, text revision. American Academy of Sleep Medicine; 2023.

2. Ahmed IM, Thorpy MJ. In: Thorpy MJ, Billiard M, eds. *Sleepiness: Causes, Consequences and Treatment*. Cambridge University Press; 2011:36-47. **3.** Overeem S et al. *Sleep Med Clin*. 2012;7:263-281. **4.** Thorpy M, Morse AM. *Sleep Med Clin*. 2017;12(1):61-71. **5.** Ahmed I, Thorpy M. *Clin Chest Med*. 2010;31(2):371-381.

Cataplexy

Cataplexy rarely presents in a clinical setting, and it can range from obvious to subtle manifestations¹⁻³

Cataplexy is defined in the *International Classification of Sleep Disorders*, third edition, text revision (ICSD-3-TR) as more than one episode of **generally brief (<2 minutes), sudden loss of muscle tone, usually bilaterally symmetrical, with retained consciousness**¹

- Episodes follow strong emotions, usually positive and very frequently associated with laughter, based on patient reports¹
- In patients with narcolepsy, cataplexy may not develop until years later, so it is important to evaluate patients on more than one occasion^{1,2,4}

1. American Academy of Sleep Medicine. *International Classification of Sleep Disorders*. 3rd ed, text revision. American Academy of Sleep Medicine; 2023.
2. Thorpy M, Morse AM. *Sleep Med Clin*. 2017;12(1):61-71. **3.** Dauvilliers Y et al. *Nat Rev Neurol*. 2014;10(7):386-395. **4.** Sturzenegger C, Bassetti CL. *J Sleep Res*. 2004;13(4):395-406.

More to Know About Cataplexy

- Patients with narcolepsy can experience complete cataplexy or partial cataplexy, with partial cataplexy being more common¹
 - **Complete cataplexy**, the most obvious manifestation of cataplexy, may cause patients to collapse to the ground and briefly remain there^{1,2}
 - **Partial cataplexy** is more common but less obvious—others may not even notice a cataplexy attack unless they are used to seeing one¹
- Cataplexy often occurs in the head and neck, manifesting as head drops, but may also occur in other areas (eg, knee buckling, arm/hand weakness)^{1,2}

Patients who experience partial cataplexy may describe themselves as clumsy or report dropping things³

- **Facial hypotonia is a reliable marker of cataplexy** and manifests as abrupt interruption of the smile or facial expression, mouth opening, and sagging of the jaw or eye muscles²⁻⁴

1. American Academy of Sleep Medicine. *International Classification of Sleep Disorders*. 3rd ed, text revision. American Academy of Sleep Medicine; 2023.

2. Thorpy M, Morse AM. *Sleep Med Clin*. 2017;12(1):61-71. 3. Pelayo R, Lopes MC. In: Lee-Chiong TL, ed. *Sleep: A Comprehensive Handbook*. John Wiley & Sons; 2006:145-149.

4. Pizza F et al. *Sleep*. 2018;41(5). doi:10.1093/sleep/zsy026

Additional Symptoms of Narcolepsy

Disrupted nighttime sleep

Many patients with narcolepsy have disrupted nighttime sleep, reporting **frequent awakenings and poor-quality sleep**, although they rarely report problems with sleep onset.^{1,2}

Hypnagogic/hypnopompic hallucinations

About one-third of all patients with narcolepsy have **vivid, dreamlike experiences during the transition from wake to sleep** (hypnagogic hallucinations) or during the transition from sleep to wake (hypnopompic hallucinations).^{1,3}

Automatic behavior

Patients may also experience automatic behaviors during microsleep episodes in which **they perform everyday activities without any memory of doing so**. This happens because patients may not be fully awake and alert, affecting memory formation.⁴

Sleep paralysis

Sleep paralysis may occur together with hypnagogic or hypnopompic hallucinations.¹ It usually occurs at the point of waking but may also occur at sleep onset.³



There's More to Know

Sleep Science



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narcolepsy in adult patients at **TMTK.com**