



Narcolepsy in Pediatric Patients: **Symptoms of Narcolepsy**



Symptoms of Narcolepsy

Narcolepsy is a **chronic and lifelong neurologic disorder** of sleep-wake state instability characterized by EDS and abnormal manifestations of REM sleep¹⁻³

All pediatric patients with narcolepsy experience EDS^{1,4}

Approximately 70% to 80% of pediatric patients with narcolepsy experience cataplexy^{4,5}

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.** Thorpy M, Morse AM. *Sleep Med Clin*. 2017;12(1):61-71. **3.** Thorpy MJ, Bogan RK. *Sleep Med*. 2020;68:97-109. **4.** Maski K, Kotagal S. Clinical features and diagnosis of narcolepsy in children. Clinical Decision Support | UpToDate | Wolters Kluwer. Updated July 29, 2024. Accessed January 6, 2025. <https://www.uptodate.com/contents/clinical-features-and-diagnosis-of-narcolepsy-in-children> **5.** Chung I-H et al. *Children (Basel)*. 2022;9(7):974. doi:10.3390/children9070974

Excessive Daytime Sleepiness (EDS)

In pediatric patients, EDS may range from waxing and waning drowsiness to sleep attacks.^{1,2}

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

- EDS may present differently in pediatric patients compared to adult patients, such as³:
 - Behavioral changes
 - Appearing hyperactive, impulsive, irritable, or inattentive
- It is more likely to occur in sedentary, boring, and monotonous situations that do not require active participation (eg, sitting in a classroom, reading a book, or being driven in a car)^{1,3}
- EDS and impaired sustained attention can impact patients' ability to function at school and in social situations^{1,3}

1. American Academy of Sleep Medicine. *International Classification of Sleep Disorders*. 3rd ed, text revision. American Academy of Sleep Medicine; 2023. **2.** Maski K, Kotagal S. Clinical features and diagnosis of narcolepsy in children. Clinical Decision Support | UpToDate | Wolters Kluwer. Updated July 29, 2024. Accessed January 6, 2025. <https://www.uptodate.com/contents/clinical-features-and-diagnosis-of-narcolepsy-in-children> **3.** Plazzi G et al. *Pediatr Neurol*. 2018;85:21-32.

Cataplexy

Cataplexy rarely presents in a clinical setting, and it can range from obvious to subtle manifestations.¹⁻³

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

- Cataplexy onset may appear very close to the onset of EDS and can be severe^{1,4}
- Cataplexy generally manifests as muscle weakness in the face, neck, or legs and is typically triggered by strong emotions, particularly those associated with laughter^{1,4}
- Pediatric patients may experience “cataplectic facies”^{1,4}:
 - A collective term that includes weakness involving the face, eyelids, and mouth with tongue protrusion
 - Not always clearly triggered by an emotion

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.** 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.** Maski K, Kotagal S. Clinical features and diagnosis of narcolepsy in children. Clinical Decision Support | UpToDate | Wolters Kluwer. Updated July 29, 2024. Accessed January 6, 2025. <https://www.uptodate.com/contents/clinical-features-and-diagnosis-of-narcolepsy-in-children>

Additional Symptoms of Narcolepsy

Hypnagogic/hypnopompic hallucinations

Some pediatric patients have vivid, dreamlike experiences during the transition from wake to sleep (hypnagogic hallucinations) or during the transition from sleep to wake (hypnopompic hallucinations).¹ These hallucinations can have visual, auditory, and tactile characteristics and may be very disturbing.^{1,2}

Sleep paralysis

Sleep paralysis describes the temporary inability to move, open the eyes, or speak at sleep-wake transitions despite being awake; these can last several minutes and be very distressing^{1,2}

Hypnagogic hallucinations and sleep paralysis sometimes occur together and can be difficult to confirm, depending on the verbal ability of the patient.¹

1. American Academy of Sleep Medicine. *International Classification of Sleep Disorders*. 3rd ed, text revision. American Academy of Sleep Medicine; 2023. **2.** Chung I-H et al. *Children (Basel)*. 2022;9(7):974. doi:10.3390/children9070974



There's More to Know

Sleep Science



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in pediatric patients at **TMTK.com**



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