

## Treating Narcolepsy



There is no cure for narcolepsy, but this disorder can be managed through medicine and lifestyle changes. Work with your healthcare provider to create a plan that's best for you. Getting support from your family and friends will also help you to cope with narcolepsy at home and at work.

### Working with your healthcare provider

Describe your sleeping problems to your healthcare provider. Be prepared to answer questions about your health and family history. Try to keep a daily sleep diary for a couple of weeks. Record the times when you fall asleep and wake up. Also write down any symptoms you notice and what was happening just before the episode. A sleep study and daytime nap study can help diagnose narcolepsy. Your healthcare provider will prescribe the best medicine for you and will discuss any possible side effects.

### Sleep study

A sleep study is done at a sleep clinic. Sensors will be placed on your head and body to record your brain waves, breathing, and body movement. Your sleep will be watched all night in a study called a polysomnogram. You will also have a daytime nap study called a multiple sleep latency test. The results will help your healthcare provider diagnose narcolepsy. Then your treatment can be planned.



### Living with narcolepsy

Symptoms of narcolepsy often affect your daily life. But you can learn ways to cope at home, work, or school. Try these tips:

- Teach your family and friends about narcolepsy and your special needs.
- Join a narcolepsy support group. There, you can talk about your sleep problem. You can also share ideas about coping with your symptoms.
- Report changes in your symptoms and any medicine side effects to your healthcare provider.
- At work or at school, tell your employer, teacher, or school nurse about your special needs.
- If you become drowsy when driving, pull over to a safe place to nap.

### Healthy habits

These healthy habits may help reduce your symptoms:

- **Schedule short naps during the day.** Planned naps can help reduce drowsiness.
- **Keep a regular sleep schedule.** Go to bed and get up at the same time each day.
- **Exercise regularly.** But don't do strenuous exercise for 2 to 4 hours before bedtime.
- **Don't have any or limit caffeine, nicotine, and alcohol before bed.** Don't take these for several hours before bedtime.

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