

Narcolepsy Diagnosis, Test Treatment and Prevention

Narcolepsy is a chronic neurological disorder, affecting the part of the brain that regulates when to be asleep and when to be awake. Narcolepsy is occurred in between the age group of 11 to 26. The exact cause of narcolepsy is unknown. Almost 75% of patients with narcolepsy reported falling asleep while driving in one survey and 56% reported near accidents. Narcolepsy is a lifelong condition, but by implementing certain lifestyle changes and seeking medical help, narcoleptics can improve alertness and enjoy a full and active life. This also contains the various risk factors like as effects on mental functioning, physical problems and so on.

Symptoms of narcolepsy

Inability to use muscles

Sleep paralysis

Persistent drowsiness

Physical illness

Sleep attacks

Awake and refreshed feeling after each episode

Difficulty for a young adult to stay awake during classes or work

Daytime napping

Diagnosis of narcolepsy

A narcolepsy diagnosis requires several tests. If you are experiencing symptoms of narcolepsy, talk to your doctor.

Blood tests determines the presence of narcolepsy-related genes, or medical illnesses associated with excessive sleepiness.

To determine specific sleep disorders, the doctor will take a medical and family history and should be told of any medications being taken.

Two tests that are considered essential in confirming a diagnosis of narcolepsy are the polysomnogram (PSG) and the multiple sleep latency test (MSLT). Both tests are performed in a sleep lab.

By taking multiple sleep latency test we can diagnose the narcolepsy.

The patient has been withdrawn from these medications within the last three weeks.

Cataplexy (abrupt loss of muscle tone or weakness that causes a person to stop all motor activity).

Diagnosis of narcolepsy can take a very long time, sometimes more than one year, or even up to several decades.

For this ECG may be preferred for the diagnosis which measures the heart's electrical activity.

Treatment for narcolepsy

With the help of antidepressants medications are may be used treat narcolepsy.

Eating light or vegetarian meals during the day and avoiding heavy meals prior to important activities may help reduce the odds of an attack after daytime meals.

Ritalin helps to reduce excessive daytime sleepiness and improves alertness. Side effects include headache, irritability, nervousness, and gastrointestinal problems.

Narcolepsy is treated by use of stimulating medications during the daytime. A new medication called modafanil seems to have fewer side effects than traditional stimulants.

Prevention for narcolepsy

There is no known prevention for narcolepsy. Problems may also occur when maintaining a consistent sleep and wake schedule is disrupted. This occurs when traveling between times zones and with shift workers on rotating schedules, particularly nighttime workers.

Avoid caffeine, alcohol, and nicotine which can causes the sleeping disorders.

Avoid situations that aggravate the condition if you are prone to attacks of narcolepsy.

Patients with narcolepsy cannot perform psychomotor tasks or maintain alertness as well as normal controls, even when treated with psychostimulants and REM-sleep-suppressing drugs.

About the Author

Rachel Broune writes articles for [depression treatments](#). He also writes for [alternative medicines](#)