



Narcolepsy FAQs

*Typical questions and simple responses
for casual conversations*

Q: *What is narcolepsy?*

A: Narcolepsy is a fascinating neurological disorder of the sleep/wake cycle.

Q: *So you sleep all the time?*

A: Sleepiness is an aspect of narcolepsy, but it's much more complicated. The timing of my sleepiness is "off" – so I may fight sleep during the day but be unable to sleep at night.

Q: *Could you fall asleep right now?*

A: Probably not. I experience episodes of extreme sleepiness, generally brought on by situations that would make anyone tired (dark rooms, hot rooms, or jet-lag), but these situations make me 100 times more tired than normal.

Q: *What are symptoms of narcolepsy?*

A: Narcolepsy involves: Excessive Daytime Sleepiness, Cataplexy (muscle weakness with emotions), Hallucinations upon falling asleep or waking up, and sleep paralysis (inability to move upon falling asleep or waking). Not everyone has all the symptoms to the same degree.

Q: *Were you born with narcolepsy?*

A: No, people aren't born with narcolepsy. It usually develops in childhood, teens or early 20's.

Q: *How did you get narcolepsy?*

A: It's believed to be an autoimmune disorder in which particular brain cells regulating the sleep/wake cycle deteriorate. Scientists are working to better understand this process.

Q: *I've never met anyone else with narcolepsy. Is it rare?*

A: Narcolepsy isn't all that rare – affecting about 200,000 Americans and 3 million people worldwide. Only **25%** have proper diagnosed and treatment. You probably know someone else with narcolepsy, but it's an invisible disease that many keep private.

Q: *Is there treatment?*

A: I manage my symptoms by taking medication twice a day and twice a night. I also nap daily. The best medications improve my symptoms, but make me sick in other ways. It's a give and take.

Q: *Does narcolepsy impact your life?*

A: Narcolepsy challenges me daily, but I'm proud to be overcoming this adversity. Undiagnosed, narcolepsy presents safety concerns, compromises education and employment.

Q: *Is there a cure?*

A: There is currently no cure, but scientists are working towards better solutions. Hopefully someday!