

HOMEOPATHY FOR NARCOLEPSY

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Narcolepsy is a sleep disorder characterized by excessive sleepiness, sleep paralysis, hallucinations, and in some cases episodes of cataplexy (partial or total loss of muscle control, often triggered by a strong emotion such as laughter). Narcolepsy occurs equally in men and women and is thought to affect roughly 1 in 2,000 people. The symptoms appear in childhood or adolescence, but many people have symptoms of narcolepsy for years before getting a proper diagnosis.

Types of narcolepsy

There are two types of narcolepsy:

- **Type 1** is the most common. It includes a symptom called cataplexy, or sudden loss of muscle tone. People with this type have episodes of extreme sleepiness and cataplexy during the day time due to low levels of a protein called hypocretin.
- **Type 2** is narcolepsy without cataplexy. Usually people with type 2 narcolepsy have normal levels of hypocretin.

Causes

· Narcolepsy with cataplexy is caused by a lack of the chemical hypocretin in the brain. Hypocretin is an important chemical for regulating wakefulness and rapid eye movement (REM) sleep. A shortage of hypocretin causes excessive sleepiness, and features of REM sleep (also called ‘dreaming sleep’) become present during wakefulness. An autoimmune disorder. A person’s immune system attacks the brain cells that produce hypocretin, resulting in a shortage of this chemical.

· **Family history.** Some persons with narcolepsy have close relatives with similar symptoms.

- **Brain injury or brain tumor.** In a small number of patients, the area of brain controls REM sleep and wakefulness can be injured by trauma, tumor or disease.
- **Infections.** Research also indicates a possible association with exposure to the swine flu (H1N1 flu) virus and certain form of H1N1 vaccine.
- **Stress**
- **Environmental toxins,** such as pesticides, heavy metals and secondhand smoke.

Symptoms

- **Excessive daytime sleepiness (EDS):** All patients with narcolepsy have this symptom. In general EDS interferes with normal activities, such as work, school, home life, social activities etc, every day. People with EDS have mental cloudiness, a lack of energy and concentration, memory lapses, a depressed mood and/or extreme exhaustion.
- **Cataplexy:** This symptom is a sudden loss of muscle tone or strength brought on by strong emotions, such as laughter, fear, surprise, stress or anger. It can occur at any time. The attacks range from a brief buckling of the knees or slackness in the jaw or drooping of eyelids to total body paralysis with collapse. Cataplexy usually lasts a few seconds to several minutes. The patient remains fully conscious during these attacks. The rate of attacks ranges from a few in a lifetime to several per day. Although scary, there is no damage from these episodes.
- **Disrupted nighttime sleep:** This symptom is described as frequent awakening during the night.
- **Sleep paralysis:** This symptom is the inability to move or speak just before falling asleep or just after waking up. Episodes of

sleep paralysis usually go away after a few seconds to a few minutes.

- **Hallucinations:** Usually, these delusional experiences are vivid and may be frightening. The hallucinations occur just before falling asleep (called hypnagogic hallucinations) or just after waking up (called hypnopompic hallucinations). Examples include seeing a person or animal in the room, feeling of floating or sensations of being touched, and hearing an alarm or voices.

- **Automatic behavior:** This symptom is described as falling asleep for several seconds but continues to perform routine tasks, such as eating, talking, driving or writing, without any awareness or later memory of ever doing the task.

Management

A. Drug therapy

B. Life style changes.

Consider the following:

- Follow a regular sleep/wake schedule. Go to bed and wake up at about the same time every day. Avoid intentional sleep loss, such as staying awake late on weekends.

- Keep bedroom quiet, dark, cool and comfortable. Do not watch TV or bring computers or phones into bed.

- Avoid alcohol and caffeine (colas, coffee, teas, energy drinks and chocolate) for several hours before bedtime.

- Avoid smoking, especially in the evening.

- Exercise at least 20 minutes per day. Do not exercise within 3 hours of bedtime.

- Do not eat large, heavy meals or a lot of liquids close to bed time.
- Relax before bedtime. Take a warm bath, meditate, perform some gentle yoga moves, listen to soft music, expose to relaxing scents such as peppermint, eucalyptus, or lavender.
- Take short naps, 20 to 30 minutes at times, when feeling most sleepy, if possible.

HOMEOPATHIC REMEDIES

HOMEOPATHY today is a rapidly growing system and is being practiced all over the world. Its strength lies in its evident effectiveness as it takes a holistic approach towards the sick individual through promotion of inner balance at mental, emotional, spiritual and physical levels. When NARCOLEPSY is concerned there are many effective medicines available in HOMEOPATHY, but the selection depends upon the individuality of the patient, considering mental and physical symptoms.

ANTIMONIUM CRUDUM: Strong inclination to sleep during the day, especially in the evening or morning. Sleepy and weary. Drowsiness, especially in elderly people. Deep un-refreshing sleep.

ANTIMONIUM TARTARICUM: Irresistible inclination to sleep. Great drowsiness. Excessive yawning. On falling asleep electric-like shocks. Cries during sleep with fixed eyes and trembling. Jerking up of limbs during sleep.

ARSENIC ALBUM: Drowsy and sleepiness in the day time while sitting. Talks in sleep. Yawning and stretching of limbs. Awakened by pains. Shocks on dropping to sleep. Violent starting with twitching, trembling of limbs during sleep. Disturbed sleep at night with great restlessness.

CAUSTICUM: Sleepiness during the day, can scarcely resist it, must lie down. Yawning and stretching. Very drowsy, can hardly keep awake. Laughs and cries during sleep.

CHELIDONIUM MAJUS: Drowsiness which is so marked even in the open air, that she is near falling asleep while walking. Falls asleep while speaking.

CIMEX LECTULARIUS: Great drowsiness, falls asleep when sitting in the morning. Irresistible sleepiness during chill. Frequent yawning with cold feeling on skin.

CYCLAMEN: Great inclination to lie down, and to sleep. No desire to work. Great dejection and melancholy.

HYDROCYANIC ACID: Narcolepsy. Irresistible drowsiness. Yawning and shivering.

KALI BROMATUM: Extreme drowsiness. Drops asleep in chair.

KALI NITRICUM: Drowsiness and sleepiness in day time. Disturbed sleep at night, constant dreaming, with frequent awakening.

MERCURIUS: Great sleepiness during the day, which is not relieved from long sleep.

NATRUM MURIATICUM: Sleepy in afternoon. Nervous jerking during sleep. Sobs during sleep. Sleepiness and drowsiness after meals.

NATRUM SULPH: Sleepiness during day, especially while reading.

NUX MOSCHATA: Narcolepsy. Irresistibly drowsy, sleepy, muddled, as if intoxicated. Great drowsiness and sleepiness. Sleepy attacks, sudden with vertigo. Great sleepiness with all complaints. Dreams of falling from high place of being pursued.

NUX VOMICA: Drowsy after meals and in early evening. Better after a nap, unless aroused. Yawning. Weeping and talking during sleep. Anxious dreams, pursued by animals, dogs, and cats.

OPIUM: Great drowsiness. Falls into heavy deep sleep.

PHYSOSTIGMA VENENOSUM: Attacks of overpowering sleepiness with feeling as if to lose consciousness.

PULSATILLA NIGRICANS: Irresistible sleepiness in afternoon. Great sleepiness during day, wakes confused, languid, unrefreshed. Sleepy while eating. Wide awake in the evening, first sleep restless. Lies with hands over head or crossed on abdomen and feet drawn up. Chattering in sleep. Talks, whines, or screams during sleep.

SABADILLA: Great inclination to sleep during day. Comes on when thinking, meditating, or reading. Agitated and un-refreshing sleep at night with anxious dreams. In the morning he starts up from his sleep as from a fright.

SEPIA: Great desire to sleep during day time, falls asleep as soon as he sits down. Talks loudly during sleep.

ZINCUM METALLICUM: Narcolepsy. Sleep is broken and unrefreshing. Cries out while sleeping, body jerks, wakes frightened, startled. Loud screaming in sleep without being aware of it. Nervous motion of feet when asleep.