Causes: Most people with narcolepsy have low levels of the neurotransmitter hypocretin, which promotes wakefulness. Most cases of narcolepsy are sporadic, but in extremely rare cases, narcolepsy is caused by a genetic defect that prevents normal production of hypocretin molecules.

Symptoms:
- Excessive daytime sleepiness (EDS)
- Cataplexy (sudden loss of muscle tone while the person is awake that leads to feelings of weakness and a loss of voluntary muscle control)
- Sleep paralysis
- Hallucinations
- Disrupted nocturnal sleep
- Obesity

Treatment: Narcolepsy cannot yet be cured, but some of the symptoms can be treated with medicines and lifestyle changes. EDS and cataplexy can be controlled in most individuals with drug treatment such as modafinil and sodium oxybate. Many individuals take short, regularly scheduled naps at times when they tend to feel sleepiest. Exercising for at least 20 minutes per day at least 4 or 5 hours before bedtime also improves sleep quality and can help people with narcolepsy avoid gaining excess weight.