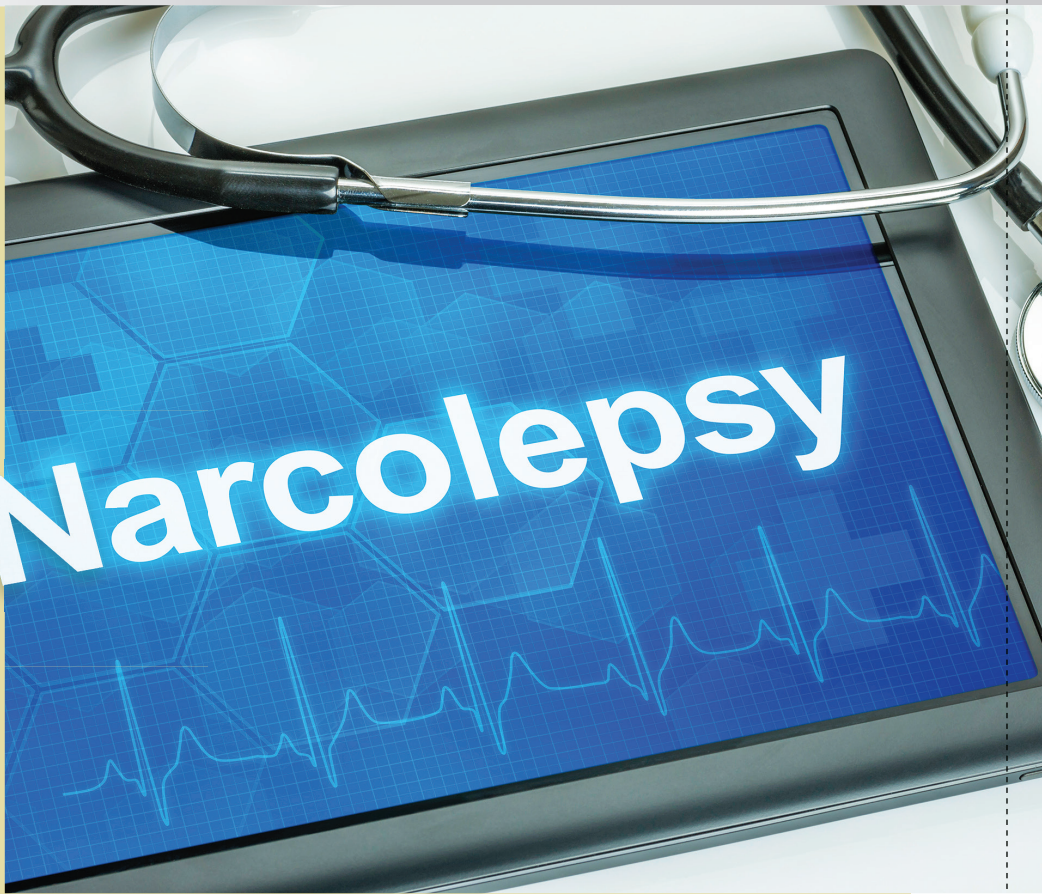


TIPS

for Living With

Narcolepsy



Narcolepsy, a chronic neurologic sleep disorder, is characterized by excessive and overwhelming daytime sleepiness. There is no cure for narcolepsy, but some of the symptoms can be managed with lifestyle changes and medications. The following tips may help if you have narcolepsy.

Think of safety first. Avoid activities that would be dangerous if you had a sudden sleep attack. These activities may include driving, climbing ladders, or operating dangerous machinery.

Contact your medical professional. If you have narcolepsy, it is important to know when to seek medical attention. Contact your doctor if you have symptoms of narcolepsy, your narcolepsy does not respond to treatment, or you develop new symptoms of narcolepsy.

Know your medication's side effects. Some medications, including medications used for seizures, allergies, depression, or anxiety, can increase or cause sleepiness. If you are taking medications for conditions other than narcolepsy, talk with your doctor about whether they may raise concerns.

Make a sleep schedule. Take scheduled naps during the daytime for 10 to 15 minutes. Planning your naps can prevent

unplanned lapses into sleep. Try, also, to get a good night's sleep during the same hours every night.

Wear a medical alert necklace or bracelet. Wearing a medical alert necklace or bracelet can be helpful because it will alert others if you suddenly fall asleep or become unable to move or speak.

Opt for smaller food portions. Some people with narcolepsy feel drowsy after eating a large meal, particularly one that is rich in carbohydrates. If you feel sleepy after eating a big meal, consider making your meals smaller.

Avoid certain substances. Substances such as caffeine, nicotine, and alcohol can interfere with your sleep. If you drink coffee, avoid drinking it after 4 pm.

Be open to therapy. Cognitive behavioral therapy may help with your narcolepsy. It may help you control symptoms and change behavior that may cause your condition to worsen.

This page is part of an ongoing series of practical tips for patients with neurologic disorders. If you have compiled clinically relevant tips that you wish to share, please contact the editor at info@neurologyreviews.com.

Tips for Patients are available for download at www.neurologyreviews.com.

