



Health Awareness

Narcolepsy: Can't Fight The Urge To Sleep?

(NAPSA)—Imagine having an urge to sleep that is so strong you fall asleep while typing a memo or just as your golf club is about to hit the ball. For many Americans, these examples are all too real: They have narcolepsy, a chronic sleep disorder caused by the brain's inability to regulate the cycles of going to sleep and staying awake. The primary symptom of narcolepsy, excessive sleepiness, frequently prevents them from remaining alert and awake consistently throughout the day.

People with narcolepsy can fall asleep without warning for a few seconds to an hour or longer. If left untreated, this inability to stay awake and remain alert can have a major impact on their lives, resulting in accidents, self-injury and social problems.

Narcolepsy occurs in approximately one in every 2,000 Americans (more than 135,000 individuals). It is often misdiagnosed, and many patients suffer with narcolepsy symptoms for 10 to 15 years before an accurate diagnosis is made. One of the reasons for the delayed diagnosis may be that excessive sleepiness is not unique to narcolepsy and can be associated with a wide range of medical conditions, including depression, viral infections, congestive heart failure or the side effects of medications.

In addition to excessive sleepiness, another less common symptom of narcolepsy is cataplexy, a sudden loss of muscle tone that leads to feelings of weakness and a loss of voluntary muscle control. Cataplexy affects approximately 70 percent of narcolepsy patients



and is often triggered by a strong emotion such as laughter, anger or surprise. Patients with narcolepsy may avoid social situations and become socially isolated.

There is no cure for narcolepsy but treatment options are typically effective at improving symptoms. According to the American Academy of Sleep Medicine, Provigil® (modafinil) Tablets [C-IV] from Cephalon, Inc. are the standard of treatment for excessive sleepiness, the most common and debilitating symptom associated with narcolepsy. Provigil has been shown to produce significant improvement in wakefulness, including improved ability to participate in daily activities. Although Provigil does not cure narcolepsy, has no effect on cataplexy and is not meant to replace sleep, it can help people stay awake when they need to be awake and allows them to sleep when they want to sleep.

In addition to medication, short naps during the day and regular exercise may help control sleepiness and maintain alertness. Maintaining a regular sleep schedule as well as avoiding alco-

hol and caffeine before bedtime can also help.

The safety of Provigil has been demonstrated in clinical trials enrolling more than 3,500 patients, coupled with eight years of patient exposure to the drug in the U.S. market and nearly 14 years worldwide. Studies have demonstrated that the sleep of patients taking Provigil is of similar quality and quantity to the sleep of individuals on placebo.

In clinical trials, Provigil was well tolerated, with an incidence of adverse events generally comparable to placebo. Most adverse events were mild to moderate. The most frequently reported adverse events were headache, nausea, nervousness, stuffy nose, diarrhea, back pain, anxiety, trouble sleeping, dizziness and upset stomach.

Provigil may help treat the excessive sleepiness caused by certain sleep disorders, but it may not stop all your sleepiness. Regardless of how improved you may feel, do not change your daily habits until your doctor tells you it is okay. Discuss your level of sleepiness with your doctor at each visit. People with sleep disorders should always be careful about doing things that could be dangerous, including driving a car.

If you are experiencing excessive sleepiness, you may be suffering from narcolepsy. The first step in obtaining an accurate diagnosis is to talk to your doctor about your symptoms. More information about narcolepsy and a treatment option can be found at www.Provigil.com or 1-800-896-5855.

Please note: This article was written by Cephalon, Inc.—manufacturers of PROVIGIL.