

Nocturia

GETTING UP AT NIGHT TO EMPTY YOUR BLADDER

WHAT IS NOCTURIA?

Nocturia is frequently waking up at night to pass urine. It often increases with age.

If you need to make several trips to the toilet at night (more than two) you may find this distressing or your sleep may be disturbed. This may also indicate that you have a bladder health problem. Nighttime trips to the bathroom can also increase the chances of slipping, tripping or falling.

WHAT CAUSES NOCTURIA?

- **Hormonal Changes.** As you age, you produce less anti-diuretic hormone. Anti-diuretic hormone is a chemical your body makes to help hold onto fluid at night, so you make less urine. Lower levels of this hormone mean that more urine is produced at night.
- **Prostate Problems.** Men's prostate glands often grow with age. An enlarged prostate can prevent your bladder from emptying properly, so you need to pass urine more often.
- **Urge Incontinence** (also known as overactive bladder). If you have a sudden need to pass urine, you may leak urine before you are able to reach a toilet.
- **Bladder Infections.** Bacteria entering your bladder can cause symptoms such as dark, cloudy and smelly urine; a burning feeling or pain when passing urine; confusion; and not being

able to empty your bladder completely.

- **Diabetes.** High blood sugar may cause frequent urination.
- **Heart problems.** Your heart and circulation may become less efficient with age. You may find fluid collects in your body's tissues, especially around your ankles. Your body can absorb this extra fluid more easily when you are lying down, for example while you are asleep. It is absorbed into your blood stream and removed by your kidneys as extra urine.
- **Sleep Related Problems.** You are more likely to feel the urge to go to the toilet while you are awake. Therefore, if you keep waking up in the night or have problems sleeping, you are more likely to need to pass urine.
- **Drinking too much fluid.** The number of times you need to urinate can increase if you drink too much fluid especially close to bed time.

IS THERE ANYTHING I CAN DO?

If you have nocturia, consider the following:

1. **Reduce the amount you drink before you go to bed.** For example, have your last drink at 8pm instead of 10pm. However, make sure you are still drinking the recommended daily amount. This is six to eight cups of fluid a day – about three to four pints or two litres. Reducing the amount you drink does not help.
2. **Have fewer drinks that contain caffeine,** such as tea, coffee, chocolate and cola. These can irritate your bladder and change your sleep patterns, as can alcohol.

- 3. If you regularly have swollen ankles, sit or lie down for about an hour during the day** (even 10 minutes can help). Raise your legs and feet so they are at or above the level of your heart. It may also help to wear support stockings.
- 4. Some medicines make your body produce more urine,** or promote its flow. In many cases this is how the medicine works to treat the condition (for example, water tablets for high blood pressure). If you are unsure if your medicines could be causing nocturia, ask your doctor. Do not stop taking your medicines without the advice of your doctor.
- 5. Think about whether anything is disturbing your sleep,** such as light or temperature. If you have painful conditions that disturbed your sleep, consult with your doctor. Avoid naps during the day to see if this helps you sleep better at night. Also, avoid stimulants like drinks containing caffeine before bed.

ADDITIONAL TREATMENT FOR NOCTURIA

If nocturia continues, you may have a bladder problem that requires medical treatment. Speak to your doctor about other treatments that may be helpful.