

Patient information

Nocturnal Polyuria

Urology Department

Nocturnal polyuria is when an abnormally large amount of urine is produced in the night time. This leaflet explains possible causes and treatments.

What is nocturnal polyuria?

Nocturnal polyuria is when an abnormally large amount of urine is produced during the night. Your bladder can hold a fixed amount of urine. Once your bladder is full, you will wake up wanting to pass urine. Each time your kidneys produce a bladder full of urine, you will be woken up by the desire to pass urine. If your kidneys produce three 'bladder fulls' in the night you will get up three times.

How does the doctor diagnose nocturnal polyuria?

You will be asked to fill in a time and amount chart for three days. This chart asks you to record the time that you pass urine and the amount of urine that you pass. You do this by passing urine into a measuring jug and writing down the amount of urine you have passed. It is important that you fill in the chart as accurately as possible.

The doctor will look at the chart and add up how much urine you pass in the day and how much urine you pass in the night. If you pass more than one third of your 24 hour urine output at night, then you have nocturnal polyuria.

You need to include the first urination of the morning in the night time calculation because this urine was made during the night.

What causes nocturnal polyuria?

There are a variety of causes of nocturnal polyuria.

These include:

- Disruption of the normal body rhythms. The body has a normal rhythm. This reduces the amount of urine the kidneys normally produce at night. In some people the body's rhythm is upset and the kidneys do not reduce their urine output at night.
- Some breathing problems can cause imbalances in the salts in the blood. This puts strain on the heart. This can cause nocturnal polyuria.
- Heart failure or problems with the veins in the legs can lead to ankle swelling. When you go to bed, the fluid in the ankles is returned to the heart and then goes to the kidneys. This increases the urine production.

- **Poor diabetes control.** When your diabetes control is poor, sugar escapes into the urine. When there is sugar in the urine, extra fluid is sucked into the urine. This makes you pass more urine in the day and the night. You may only notice the problem at night.

What treatment options are available?

Lifestyle measures

- **Fluid restriction** - Try cutting down the amount of fluid you drink in the evening. Aim to have nothing to drink after 6pm or for three hours before you go to bed. Increase your day time fluid intake so that you continue to drink the same amount of fluid overall.
- **Diet** - Avoid a heavy meal in the evening. As food is digested, water is released.
- **Take an afternoon nap** - Have a sleep in the afternoon with your legs elevated (raised). This helps the fluid return to the heart before you go to bed.
- **Elevate your legs in the evening** - If you sit for a period of time in the evening, elevate your legs. Preferably elevate your legs to the level of your heart. Sitting with your legs down will encourage fluid to collect in the legs causing more of a problem when you go to bed.
- **Compression stockings** - Stockings which compress the legs help to return fluid to the heart. These should only be used after consultation with your family doctor (GP). They should not be used if you have problems with the circulation to your legs.

Medical Treatments

- **Diuretics or water tablets** - A small dose of a water tablet at about 4pm will help you to get rid of excess fluid in the hours before you go to bed.
- **Desmopressin** - This medicine switches off the kidneys. If taken before bed time it stops the kidneys producing urine during the night. It must be used with caution because it can cause problems with blood pressure, fluid retention and blood salt abnormalities. It can be very effective in some people.
- **Improving diabetes control** - If your diabetes is poorly controlled this can significantly increase the amount of urine you pass at night. Improving the control can reduce the amount of urine you produce.

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Further information

For general queries telephone the Urology Centre on Tel: 0151 282 6809
Text phone number: 18001 0151 282 6809

For clinical questions specific to your case, telephone the secretary of your Urology Consultant.

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