

Patient Code of Rights

YOUR CODE OF RIGHTS

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NOCTURNAL POLYURIA



UROLOGY SERVICE

NOCTURNAL POLYURIA

Why does it happen?

Nocturnal polyuria means passing large amounts of urine at night, but normal amounts during the day. There are a number of possible reasons why you may need to get up at night to pass urine; these may include:

- Poor sleep patterns
- Your bladder or prostate are causing you trouble
- You are producing too much urine at night (nocturnal polyuria)
- Any combination of the above

What will the doctor ask me to do?

In order for your doctor to work out the main cause for your symptoms, he/she will ask you to complete a bladder diary. You will need to record the time and amount of urine you pass every time you go to the toilet, as well as how much fluid you drink. You will need to complete the bladder diary for two to three days.

Why do I produce too much urine at night?

The body normally produces a chemical from the brain at night, which tells the kidneys to cut down the amount of urine produced whilst you are asleep. This chemical is called antidiuretic hormone (or ADH). When you are young, ADH reduces urine production so that you produce less than a fifth of the 24-hour total at night.

As you get older, especially over the age of 65, you should still be producing less than a third of your total urine output at night. When you produce too much urine overnight (i.e more than one third of your daily total), this is called nocturnal polyuria. There are a number of causes:

- You may not be producing enough ADH (Vasopressin)

- You may drink too much in the evening. This may include eating foods with a high water content (e.g fruit, vegetables, rice, salads and pasta).
- You use the night-time to get rid of any excess water from your body.

Many people may develop swelling or puffiness of the ankles in the evening but notice that they are normal, or less puffy, in the morning. This is because, when you lie down, the water which causes the puffiness passes into the bloodstream and is converted into urine by the kidneys. Once this urine is passed to the bladder, it wakes you up during the night with a full bladder.

How can I help myself?

Your doctor will, of course, ask you about your eating and drinking habits in the evening. He/she will also examine you for any ankle swelling. However, there are some things that you can do yourself to help:

- Adjust your drinking and eating to take less fluid in the evening
- Reduce caffeine and alcohol intake, particularly in the evening
- Eat most of your water-containing food earlier in the day
- If your ankles are swollen, put your feet up as often as possible, particularly early afternoon. This will help your body to get rid of the water during the day. This however is not an invitation to become a 'couch potato'
- Increase your exercise levels (especially walking) because it helps to push excess fluid back into your circulation, where it belongs

What if these simple measures do not help?

If you have tried your best to deal with the problem but you still produce too much urine at night, your doctor may try to help you by:

- Prescribing a water tablet (diuretic) which makes your kidneys produce more urine. If this is given late afternoon (about 4pm) it can encourage your kidneys to expel the excess water in the evening instead of at night, so you sleep better
- Prescribing synthetic ADH (either in tablet form or nasal spray form) taken just before bed-time. This must be used with caution in the older adult because it may precipitate water retention, which can put strain upon the heart in patients with heart conditions or high blood pressure
- Prescribing a special tablet (Imipramine) to inhibit bladder activity. This is often used in children who wet the bed at night

What if I have other concerns?

If you have any other concerns or worries about your symptoms, or about any other aspects of this problem, you should always discuss them with your family doctor (GP).

Reviewed: January 2015