

Nocturia is defined as being awakened at night to urinate, although after the age of 60, getting up once or twice at night to urinate is normal. Nocturia may be one of your symptoms of overactive bladder (OAB) in addition to urgency, frequency, with or without incontinence or may be the only urinary symptom you may be experiencing.

Causes

- Excessive fluids before bedtime
- Medications
- Behavioral patterns (i.e. poor sleeping habits)
- Caffeine intake
- Alcohol intake
- Fluid redistribution – during the day, fluid accumulates in the body's lower extremities. When you lie down to sleep, fluid is reabsorbed into the bloodstream and processed into urine by the kidneys.
- Nocturnal polyuria - an overproduction of urine at night or a nighttime urine volume greater than 20-30% of the total 24 hour urine volume. As you age, the muscles in your veins weaken and are less able to process fluid in an upward direction toward your heart while you are in a sitting or standing position. Your veins take advantage of your leg elevation for six to eight hours at night while you sleep causing an increase in urine production.

Treatment

- Restrict evening fluid intake (after 6 pm)
- Elevate your legs – Elevating your legs above your heart during the day helps promote circulation and allows your body to process more fluid during the day instead of at night. Lying on your sofa with your feet on the arm of the sofa, or on your bed with your feet on pillows promotes circulation. Sitting in a recliner or with your feet on a step stool is not sufficient.
- Compression stockings – many are covered by health insurance and can be obtained from a medical supply pharmacy (Hartzell's Pharmacy)
- Medications – There are several medications used to help treat nocturia due to overactivity of the bladder. Basically all of these medications decrease bladder spasms and increase the amount of urine the bladder can hold.