

## Nocturia

Nocturia is the term used to describe getting up at night to pass urine. It is considered normal for adults to get up once a night to pass urine and this often increases as we get older. For example, it would be normal for someone aged 80+ years to get up to the toilet three times a night.

### Assessment

Your health professional will have offered you a full continence assessment. This may have included:

- A history of your urinary symptoms
- A urine test to exclude any infection causing your symptoms
- A bladder scan to check your bladder is emptying well
- A bladder chart

Using this assessment, the reason for your needing to get up at night to pass urine will have been identified. It may be:

### Nocturnal Polyuria

- Producing more than a third of your urine output during the night.

### Small Functional Bladder Capacity

- When your bladder is only able to store a small amount of urine, this can lead to frequent bladder emptying. Possible causes include an overactive bladder, irritation due to stones, infection or having a small capacity bladder.
- Poor bladder emptying may result in frequent trips to the toilet overnight.

### Secondary Nocturnal Voiding

- This is when you empty your bladder at night because you wake for other reasons such as anxiety, pain or insomnia.

You may find you have just one or a combination of these causes. Once the cause of your nocturia has been decided, the following may be helpful in reducing the times you need to get up:

### If you have Nocturnal Polyuria

- ✓ Restrict your fluid intake to 1½ litres / 6-8 mugs per day.
- ✓ Restrict your fluid intake before going to bed and during the night.
- ✓ Take a rest (for at least 1 hour) during the afternoon with your feet raised higher than your heart. This improves the blood circulation to your heart and kidneys and may increase your urinary output during the afternoon and evening.
- ✓ If you have swollen ankles (postural oedema) wearing support stockings may help
- ✓ Taking a diuretic (water pill) to increase your urine output in the day may help. Speak to your health professional to see if this is appropriate for you.
- ✓ Nettle tea acts as a diuretic. A drink during the day may increase your daytime urine output. However it is not advisable to drink Nettle tea if you suffer from high blood pressure or diabetes.

- ✓ If you are already taking a diuretic, changing the type or time you take it to later in the day may help. Discuss this with your health professional.
- ✓ As you age you may produce larger amounts of urine at night due to changes in the body's production of the Anti-diuretic hormone. The drug 'Desmopressin' can be prescribed to replace this. However, this may not be suitable for those over 65 years or who have any cardiac condition. Speak to your health professional to see if this is appropriate for you.

### **If you have Small Functional Bladder Capacity**

- ✓ Restrict your fluid intake to 1½ litres / 6-8 mugs per day.
- ✓ Restrict your fluid intake before going to bed and during the night.
- ✓ Caffeine may irritate your bladder, increasing your feelings to pass urine at night. Try reducing your intake of caffeinated drinks.
- ✓ Avoid going to the toilet 'just in case' during the day.
- ✓ If assessment has shown you have an overactive bladder, following a bladder retraining programme during the day may help reduce night time frequency.
- ✓ Medication (Anticholinergics) may help to reduce feelings of urgency and frequency. Speak to your health professional to see if this is appropriate for you.
- ✓ If it has been shown your bladder does not empty fully every time you go to the toilet, passing an intermittent catheter before going to bed may help. Speak to your health professional to see if this is appropriate for you.

### **If you have Secondary Nocturnal Voiding**

- ✓ If you have developed a routine of getting up to go to the toilet at night, try to break this habit.
- ✓ Identify any environmental conditions that may be disturbing your sleep ie too much light, noise or an uncomfortable or cold bed.
- ✓ Reduce daytime naps if these affect your ability to sleep at night.
- ✓ Avoid stimulants (caffeine containing drinks, smoking) before going to bed.
- ✓ If pain wakes you up, discuss with your health care professional how this could be better controlled.