

# Nocturia

*Urology Care*  
FOUNDATION™

*The Official Foundation of the  
American Urological Association*

## WHAT IS NOCTURIA?

If you wake from sleep two or more times each night to use the bathroom, it is a clear sign of nocturia. Waking during the night to go to the bathroom can be hard to live with. Nocturia can disturb your sleep and impact your quality of life.

Nocturia is a sign that something troubling is going on in our bodies. It is not a disease in and of itself.

## WHAT CAUSES NOCTURIA?

Nocturia can be from a habit like drinking too much fluid before bed. Or it could be from certain medication, illnesses (like diabetes or heart disease) or reduced bladder capacity. Other causes:

- **Polyuria:** when your body makes too much urine in 24-hours.
- **Nocturnal polyuria:** when your body makes too much urine during the night.
- **Bladder storage problems:** when your bladder doesn't store or release urine well.
- **Mixed nocturia:** when more than one of these problems are going on at the same time.

## WHAT ARE THE SYMPTOMS OF NOCTURIA?

You should be able to sleep for 6-8 hours without waking. Waking up to go to the bathroom two or more times during the night affects your quality of sleep. In turn, it affects your quality of life. Most people don't do well during the day without solid sleep.

## HOW IS NOCTURIA DIAGNOSED?

You and your health care provider will want to learn the cause of your nocturia. You'll be asked about your symptoms and health history. To help make a diagnosis, your provider may have you keep a bladder diary.

*If your health care provider needs more information, he or she may ask you to take the clinical tests below:*

- **Urine culture and urinalysis:** checks for signs of infection, blood, protein or other abnormalities in your urine.
- **Blood test:** checks your kidney function.
- **Bladder scan:** measures how much urine is left in your bladder after you go to the bathroom.
- **Cystoscopy:** looks inside of your bladder using either a scope.
- **Urodynamic testing:** tests to see how the bladder fills and empties. This test will also look and see how the nerves and muscles in your bladder work.

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## HOW IS NOCTURIA TREATED?

Depending on your health care provider's diagnosis and the results from your tests, there are several ways to treat nocturia.

### Lifestyle changes:

- **Limit fluid intake at night.** Drink plenty of fluids during the day but limit fluids 2-4 hours before going to bed. Limit caffeine and alcohol.
- **Manage your use of diuretics.** If you have to take a diuretic, take these 6 or more hours before sleep. This will help reduce the number of times you urinate at night.
- **Raise your legs or use compression socks.** If you have fluid build-up in your legs, it helps to raise them. Using elastic compression stockings may help.
- **Enjoy afternoon naps.** When you sleep poorly, a nap can be welcome. Naps can also allow liquids to flow into the bloodstream. However, be careful not to nap too much.

### Management:

- If you have bed-wetting, there are products to help keep you and your bed dry. For example, waterproof mattress covers, absorbent briefs, and skincare products.

### Medicine:

If lifestyle changes alone don't help, some medicines may:

- Help the kidneys produce less urine.
- Treat bladder muscle problems. Anticholinergic drugs relax the bladder if it spasms. These are used for overactive bladder.
- Regulate urine production and high blood pressure (diuretics).

If an underlying illness leads to nocturia, then treating that illness will surely help. It's important to treat: diabetes, high blood pressure, congestive heart failure, obstructive sleep apnea, and/or enlarged prostate/ benign prostatic hyperplasia (BPH).

## QUESTIONS TO ASK YOUR DOCTOR

- Do I need to see a specialist? If so, can you give me a referral?
- Will I need to have tests to find the cause of my nocturia?
- What other problem could be causing my symptoms, and why?
- What treatments do you think are right for me and why?
- What are the pros and cons of each type of treatment?
- After I start treatment, are there problems I should watch for?
- Will I need treatment for the rest of my life?

## ABOUT UROLOGY CARE FOUNDATION

The Urology Care Foundation is the world's leading urologic Foundation – and the official Foundation of the American Urological Association. We provide information for those actively managing their urologic health and those ready to make healthy changes. Our information is based on the American Urological Association resources and is reviewed by medical experts.

To learn more, visit [UrologyHealth.org/UrologicConditions](https://UrologyHealth.org/UrologicConditions) or go to [UrologyHealth.org/FindAUrologist](https://UrologyHealth.org/FindAUrologist) to find a doctor near you.

## DISCLAIMER

This information is not a tool for self-diagnosis or a substitute for medical advice. Please talk to your urologist or health care provider about your health concerns. Always consult a health care provider before you start or stop any treatments, including medications.

For printed materials about Nocturia and other urologic issues, visit [UrologyHealth.org/Order](https://UrologyHealth.org/Order) or call 800-828-7866.

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