Nocturia and nocturnal polyuria

Other formats
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Nocturia and nocturnal polyuria (NPU)
Nocturia is the need to wake at night to pass urine. Nocturia is more common as you get older, and having to get up once at night is considered normal. However, if you have to get up numerous times this can impact your sleep pattern.

Nocturnal polyuria (NPU) means that you produce ⅓ to ½ of your urine output at night, which increases your need to get up during the night to pass urine.

Age-related causes

- Ageing causes the heart and circulatory system to be less effective. This results in fluid collecting in the tissues of the body during the day, and you may notice fluid in your ankles or lower legs. At night, when you are resting, your heart and circulatory system work more easily and absorb this fluid into your bloodstream. It is then pumped back to your kidneys where it is passed out of the body as extra urine.

- The body normally produces a hormone: anti-diuretic hormone (ADH). ADH enables the body to retain fluid overnight, effectively allowing your kidneys to have a rest. As you get older, some people produce less of this hormone with the result that they produce more urine at night.

- An enlarged prostate (men only) can lead to a more frequent need to pass urine both day and night.

Other causes

- Underlying medical conditions e.g. heart conditions and diabetes

- Problems with the urinary tract e.g. kidney stones, urinary infections, or an overactive bladder (passing small, frequent volumes of urine and may be accompanied by urgency)

- Drugs

- Sleep disorders e.g. sleep apnoea

- Excessive fluid intake
Treatments for nocturia

- Healthy fluid intake of 3½ to 4 pints/2 litres of mixed fluids (variety of fluids) per day.
- Reduce caffeine, artificial sweeteners, fizzy/sparkling drinks and alcohol.
- Drink plenty of water and juices.
- Elevate your legs for an hour per day if you suffer from swollen legs.
- Drug/medication review.

Drug treatments that may help

- A low dose loop diuretic/water tablet taken late afternoon (4-6pm) encourages an evening diuresis (causes kidneys to process body fluid during the evening hours, rather than after you have gone to bed) and promotes a better night’s sleep.
- Desmopressin – this is an artificial form of ADH. When taken at bedtime, this stops the kidneys from producing urine overnight. This drug is normally licenced for people under 65 years of age, but is sometimes prescribed for older people as a treatment for nocturnal polyuria.

PALS

The Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) ensures that the NHS listens to patients, relatives, carers and friends, answers questions and resolves concerns as quickly as possible. If you have a query or concern call 01271 314090 or e-mail ndht.pals@nhs.net. You can also visit the PALS and Information Centre in person at North Devon District Hospital, Barnstaple. Alternatively, it may be possible for us to arrange an appointment in your area.

Have your say

Northern Devon Healthcare NHS Trust aims to provide high quality services. However, please tell us when something could be improved. If you have a comment or compliment about a service or treatment, please raise your comments with a member of the staff or the PALS team in the first instance.

‘Care Opinion’ comments forms are on all wards or online at www.careopinion.org.uk.

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