

Health Awareness article submitted by Christine Felding, Consultant Specialist in Obstetrics and Gynaecology.

Nocturia

Frequent Urination at Night

Nocturia also called nycturia, is defined by the International Continence Society (ICS) as "the complaint that the individual has to wake at night one or more times for voiding." The condition can be very troublesome.



That you get up once a night is okay, but more than once is too much. There are two different types of nocturia including those who get up many times every night with small amounts and others who urinate large amounts every time.

700,000 Danes have to get up twice every night (50% are under 60 years)

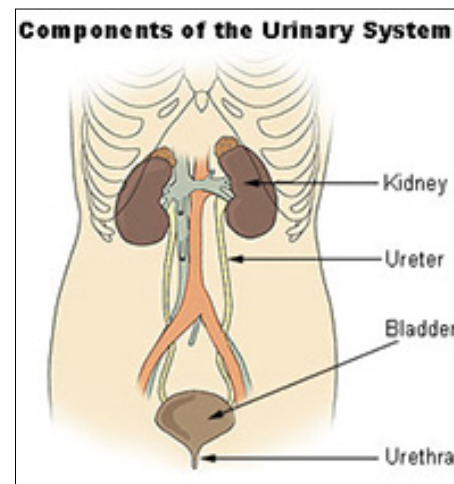
and 300,000 get up three or more times each night (25% are under 60). Some people drink too much liquid in the evening or take diuretics too late but otherwise the cause may be too little of the so-called anti-diuretic hormone - vasopressin - which is secreted from the posterior part of the pituitary. (The pituitary is a small bean-shaped gland located just below the brain).

A 55-year-old woman came to see me and complained about her sleep being disturbed as she had to get up at least three times every night. She visited the toilet too frequently during the day but that didn't bother her. She was not incontinent.

The gynecological examination was normal and the ultrasound examination of the bladder showed empty.

She was asked to make a drinking and voiding diary for two days. You make a note of when and how much you drink and how many times you go to the toilet. I gave her a free urine-cup. When she returned with the diary it turned out that between a third and half of her daily urine output was at

night. She was not on any diuretic medication, her blood pressure was normal and there was no other obvious cause for the problem.



She was started on treatment with Minirin® (desmopressin - a vasopressin-like substance). These are tablets which melt when placed under the tongue. The first days you need to get the sodium content in the blood measured.

Within a few weeks she no longer had the urge to get up at night and her quality of life was increased significantly.

The moral is: do not accept urinary trouble - either day or night.

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