

The Truth about Nocturia

Consultant Dr Badrulhisham Bahadzor has kindly offered to help set the record straight on four common misconceptions about nocturia.



Dr Badrulhisham Bahadzor
Consultant Urologist



#1 “Nocturia, or waking up at night to pee, is just a natural part of ageing.”

NOT TRUE. “There is nothing normal about waking up several times every night, once you have gone to bed, to go to use the toilet,” Dr Badrulhisham says. This is true regardless of age.

#2 “Nocturia only affects older people.”

NOT TRUE. Dr Badrulhisham has seen and treated patients both young and old who are affected by nocturia.

While the elderly may be more prone to developing nocturia due to the increasing prevalence of certain risk factors with age (benign prostatic hyperplasia, for example), other risk factors may not discriminate by age.

#3 “Nocturia is always a symptom of enlarged prostate gland in men or overactive bladder.”

NOT ALWAYS TRUE. According to

Dr Badrulhisham, nocturia can be a complex condition with a variety of possible causes. For example, someone with nocturia may have both benign prostatic hyperplasia and nocturnal polyuria in addition to having habits that also contribute to the condition. Treatment involves identifying all possible factors, and addressing them either through medication and/or behavioural changes.

Nocturia can be caused by pathological factors, which are factors related to diseases or disrupted/abnormal body functions. There are many possible pathological factors, and here are just some of the more common ones.

- **Nocturnal polyuria.** This is a fairly common cause, arising from our body’s tendency to produce more than 20% (among younger people) to 33% (among the elderly) of the total daily urine volume during the night.¹ Nocturnal polyuria can be caused by various factors. Pathological or biological reasons may include: disruptions in the

production of a hormone called arginine vasopressin (AVP), which increases the resorption of water from the kidneys.²

- Prostate enlargement in men (benign prostatic hyperplasia).²
- Bladder problems such as overactive bladder.²
- Abnormal thirst perception which may cause us to drink a lot of water before going to bed.²

Factors caused by our lifestyle include:

- Poor sleep hygiene. Sleep hygiene describes habits and practices that help us achieve excellent quality nighttime sleep. The lack of sleep hygiene can disrupt our sleep. Dr Badrulhisham explains that our body often compels itself to go to the bathroom because it doesn’t have anything else to do!
- Too much drinking of fluids, especially close to bedtime. Fluids include plain water, fruit juices, soups, porridges as well as alcohol and caffeinated drinks. “Take everything in moderation,” says Dr Badrulhisham.



#4 “Going to pee once or twice a night ... that doesn’t seem serious at all.”

NOT TRUE. Nocturia could be a sign that we have an undetected health condition, such as diabetes mellitus, diabetes insipidus, kidney disease and heart problems.³ Therefore, if we seek medical attention early, these diseases can be detected early and therefore, be more easily managed.

Furthermore, Dr Badrulhisham points out that frequently waking up and walking to the bathroom, often in a sleepy and disoriented state, puts us at risk of falls. This can be dangerous, especially among the elderly who may experience hip fractures, a leading cause of hospitalization among people in that age group.⁴

Dr Badrulhisham Bahadzor advises us to see a doctor if we experience nightly urges to wake up and urinate. This is not a normal urge that comes with ageing – it can be a sign of a more serious problem.

Frequent sleep disruption can also make us feel sleepy and unable to concentrate during the day. This puts us at risk of accidents and affect our performance in work or school. Our partners are also affected; they too experience frequent sleep disruptions each time we wake up

to answer the call of nature. As a result, we may experience a decline in quality of life. Additionally, long-term lack of proper and adequate sleep can leave negative impact on our heart and blood pressure.

Visit www.waketopee.ie for more information on nocturia.

References: 1. Rembratt, A., Norgaard, J.P., & Andersson, K-E. (2002). What is nocturnal polyuria? *BJU Int*;90 Suppl 3:18-20. 2. Weiss J.P., Blaivas J.G. (2002). Nocturnal polyuria versus overactive bladder in nocturia. *Urology*;60(5 Suppl 1):28-32. 3. Vertuno, L.L., & Kozeny, G.A. (1990). Nocturia. In Walker, H.K., Hall, W.D., & Hurst, J.W. (Eds), *Clinical methods: the history, physical, and laboratory examinations* (3rd ed.) (pp. 847-8). Boston: Butterworths. 4. Beaupre, L.A., et al. (2005). Best practices for elderly hip fracture patients: a systematic overview of the evidence. *J Gen Intern Med.*; 20(11):1019-1025.

GA003/0118/MY

A community health message
brought to you by

FERRING

PHARMACEUTICALS