



# Nocturia

A Small Disturbance That Has a Big Effect on How Rested You Feel

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We have all had those moments where you are suddenly awoken from a wonderful sleep with the abrupt urge to use the washroom late at night to pee. A small disturbance that has a big impact on how rested you feel the following morning. If these sudden and frequent urges to use the washroom overnight are something you are suffering from then you might be experiencing a sleep condition called nocturia.

## What is Nocturia?

Nocturia is defined as the consistent occurrence of waking at night one or more times to empty your bladder. While occasional night-time urination is considered normal; persistent and disruptive nocturia typically involves two or more episodes each night. This condition can affect individuals of all ages but becomes more prevalent as one ages. Sleep is a fundamental part of our overall health so when we are disturbed with a need to get up and pee consistently, it will likely have a negative impact in other parts of our daily lives as well.

If you suspect there might be a link between nocturia and Parkinson disease, you are correct.

Parkinson disease affects the coordination of muscles, including those involved in urination and the bladder. People with Parkinson's can experience difficulty initiating urination or fully emptying their bladder when using the washroom. This incomplete emptying can result in the need to urinate more frequently, especially during the night when you lay down. Nocturia in Parkinson disease can be complex. Other sleep issues, changes in mobility and the tremors associated with Parkinson's can lead to frequently awakening during the night, and the combination of disrupted sleep and bladder dysfunction largely contributes to the likelihood of experiencing Nocturia.



## What are the causes of Nocturia?

### Aging

As we age many parts of our bodies change, we also see that changes in bladder function are common across the process of ageing. Over the years one's bladder may lose its capacity to hold urine, and the ability to concentrate urine diminishes, leading to increased nighttime urination. It is very common for adults to experience it in their lifetime with 30% of those 20-40, 50% of individuals over 50 and 70% of people aged 70 and over.



### Overactive Bladder

Overactive bladder is characterized by sudden, involuntary contractions of the bladder muscles, causing a strong urge to urinate. Overactive bladder can contribute to nocturia as these contractions typically become more active during the night. The use of botulinum toxin (Botox) can be discussed with your healthcare team, as it can be helpful in reducing frequency and urgency due to an overactive bladder.

### Motor Symptoms

The motor symptoms of Parkinson's such as tremors, stiffness, and difficulty in initiating and controlling movements can affect the bladder muscles as well. These motor symptoms can affect the coordination of muscles involved in urination, leading to difficulties in fully emptying the bladder. Essentially, this can mean that you retain more in your bladder increasing the likelihood that you need to get up in the middle of the night.

### Urinary Tract Infections (UTIs)

Infections of the urinary system can lead to irritation and inflammation, causing an increased sense of urgency and frequency, particularly during the night. It's like your body is saying "Hey, let's get rid of these germs right now!" Also, these infections can make things a bit swollen and irritated, causing you to feel the need to urinate more often.

### Medications

Certain medications, such as blood pressure pills, Levodopa, and sedatives can influence bladder function and/or increase urine production, contributing to nocturia.

- » Levodopa, one of the most common medications for Parkinson disease, has been known to increase urine production and urgency in some people.
- » Sedative medications can be used to induce relaxation and improve sleep for those that are experiencing sleep difficulties. However, these types of medications can also relax the urethra and bladder muscles resulting in feeling an increased need to urinate.

### Habits

Our habits prior to bed can influence our probability of experiencing nocturia when in combination with these above-mentioned factors. A final big glass of water or milk just before bed will fill our bladder up and increase the chance that we need to get up to urinate in the middle of the night. Other habits to watch out for include eating a salt heavy diet, which causes your body to retain more fluids, and those late afternoon teas or coffees containing caffeine.





## Effects of Nocturia



### Disrupted Sleep

Nocturia disrupts the normal sleep cycle which prevents you from reaching deep, restorative sleep. This can result in daytime fatigue, diminished cognitive function, and irritability.

### Impact on Quality of Life

The constant need to wake up and navigate nighttime trips to the bathroom can affect daily activities, limit our capacity for social engagements, and impact overall quality of life by increasing daytime fatigue. Think how much we miss on those days we are tired and grumpy; those days are always less vibrant for us and have a big impact on our overall feeling of wellbeing.

### Increased Fall Risk

Multiple nighttime awakenings increase the risk of falls, particularly as mobility changes from both ageing

and the progression of Parkinson's. The path to the washroom may not be challenging during the day, but with the evening darkness and being tired, we can forget how many obstacles, like tables, chairs, or rugs, can be in the way and can increase the risk of falling. A relatively easy solution for this can be managed by the addition of a nightlight to guide your path to the washroom.

### Emotional Consequences

Nocturia and the effects of this sleep condition, specifically lack of restful sleep, can contribute to increased levels stress and anxiety. These increased levels can lead to emotional distress over time, difficulty regulating emotions, and impacts to resiliency when facing life's challenges. It is important to seek support when navigating these difficult emotions and consult your healthcare team for management techniques for nocturia.



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The good news is there are some things you can do to help manage nocturia and get a better night's sleep. First, try limiting how much you drink in the evening to lessen the chance of waking up often at night to use the bathroom. Second, if possible, try using the bathroom regularly throughout the day to avoid a full bladder in the evening. Third, avoid drinking alcohol or caffeinated beverages (coffee, tea, sodas) especially in the evening. Finally, it is important to keep up with a healthy lifestyle, like exercising, eating well, and managing stress, which can all help improve sleep.

It is important to regularly talk to your healthcare team about changes in medications to determine if they may be contributing to the issue and find the best ways to manage and improve your quality of sleep and overall health.