

Nighttime urination (nocturia): why you wake up to pee

Waking at night to urinate can come from making too much urine at night, a bladder that stores poorly, incomplete emptying, or waking for another reason and then going. Counting both trips and volumes points to the cause, which may be sleep apnea, leg swelling, diabetes or medication timing as often as the prostate or bladder.

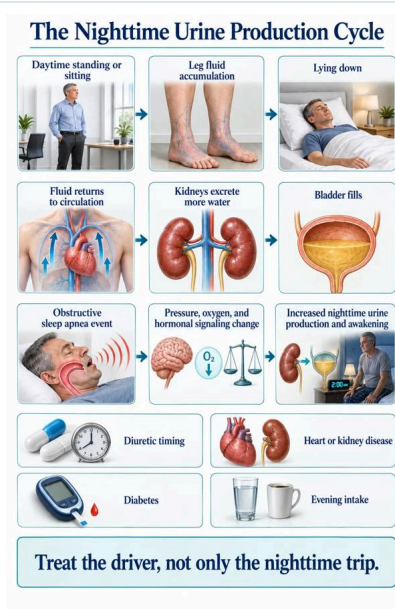


Figure 8.2. The Nighttime Urine Production Cycle.

Key points

- Many people urinate because something else woke them first.
- Several large nighttime voids suggest the body is making too much urine at night; repeated small voids suggest a storage or sleep problem.
- Fluid that pools in the legs by day returns to the circulation when you lie down, and the kidneys turn it into urine.
- Sleep apnea can increase nighttime urine production and fragment sleep.
- Simply stopping drinks after dinner may not help if the real driver is sleep apnea, swelling, diabetes or incomplete emptying.
- Nocturia and poor sleep can reinforce each other.

Get prompt care if you notice

- Sudden complete inability to urinate
- Fever or chills with flank pain
- Visible blood in the urine
- Urinary symptoms with confusion, fainting, severe weakness or new neurologic symptoms

Questions to ask your urologist

- Am I making too much urine at night, or is this a storage problem?
- Is my bladder emptying completely?
- Would a frequency-volume diary help clarify my pattern?
- Could sleep apnea, leg swelling, diabetes or the timing of my medications be contributing?
- How does the proposed treatment connect to the suspected cause, and what should improve first?

Find a urologist near you: [localurology.com](https://www.localurology.com) · Adapted from *A Urology Consult in a Book* by David Shusterman, MD, board-certified urologist. General information, not medical advice. Talk with your own doctor about your situation.