



Bedwetting

(Nocturnal Enuresis)

Bedwetting is the release of urine during sleep. Bedwetting is normal in children up to 6-7 years of age. Bedwetting is a natural process; children do not wet the bed on purpose. Bedwetting is common. Approximately 10% of 6-year-olds wet the bed at least once a month. There is a good spontaneous rate of resolution as 15% of children after age 6 will stop wetting the bed each year without any treatment. Almost all children stop wetting the bed before they turn 18.

Evaluation

- We will rule out a medical condition as a cause for the bedwetting.
- Tests such as urinalysis, renal / bladder ultrasound, xray and EMG/uroflow with post-void residual may be performed.

Treatment for bedwetting

Does your child need treatment?

The answer depends on your child and what is important to your family.

- Generally, younger children (4-5 years) should not be treated, because bedwetting is normal at that age.
- Your child has to want to stop wetting the bed, or treatment will not work well.
- Bedwetting does not hurt your child's body in any way, so some families prefer to wait longer to see if he/she outgrows it naturally. There are many ways to cope with soiled clothing / linen if this is what you prefer.
- Some kids and their families don't mind bedwetting at home but would like something to control it when they go to sleepovers or on camping trips / vacations.

General parts of treatment

- NEVER punish or shame your child for wetting the bed. Remember, your child does not wet the bed on purpose.
- Explain to your child that he/she needs to wake up at night and go to the toilet. Explain to them that only they can solve the problem.
- Have your child help with changing and washing sheets.
- Limit large amounts of liquid 2-3 hours before bedtime and especially avoid drinks with caffeine.
- Remind your child to go the bathroom every night before bed, even if they don't feel like they have to go. In fact, make sure they go twice before bed (before and after brushing teeth).
- Make it easy to get to the toilet. Use nightlights /flashlights to help them get there easily.
- Keep track of dry nights using a calendar. Put a sticker on each day your child stays dry all night. Praise your child for dry nights.
- Be supportive of your child. Encourage him/her that the problem can better if you both work together.
- Understand that better success depends on daily compliance with better bladder and bowel habits and will likely take 6 months to a year for real results to take place.
- Constipation is a major contributing factor in many children and may need to be aggressively treated.

Bedwetting alarms

Alarms are the most successful treatment for bedwetting. Alarms use a small pad which goes in your child's underwear. The pad senses moisture. As soon as your child wets the bed, the alarm wakes the child. Over time, through conditioning, your child's body learns to wake up before the alarm sounds, that is before wetting the bed.

About 70-80% of children stop wetting the bed after using an alarm everyday for 3 to 4 months. Once the bedwetting stops, they don't have to use the alarm anymore. About 10-15% of these children later start wetting the bed again, but they will usually stop if they use the alarm again.

- Advantages:
 - Alarms work well with a lasting effect.
 - An alarm is relatively cheap. They cost about \$60-\$150.
 - Alarms have no side effects.
- Disadvantages:
 - Parents have to spend a lot of time working with their child in order to get the best effect from an alarm. Usually in the beginning, the alarm will only wake the parent. Children, especially deep sleepers, might not hear the alarm for several months, forcing the parents to wake the child fully to go to bathroom and sit on the toilet.

Medicines

Medicines are sometimes used when other methods don't work, or along with other treatments.

- Advantages:
 - Medicines are often effective in the short term.
 - Medicines are useful to take to sleepovers, camps and other places where the child would be embarrassed if he/she wet the bed.
- Disadvantages:
 - Medicines don't cure bedwetting; they only control it. When children stop taking the medicine, they will usually wet the bed again.
 - Some medicines are expensive.
 - The medicines may have side effects, and some can be dangerous if a person takes too much.

Patience

The most important part of treatment!

The treatments for bedwetting take time and energy. They do not work instantly. It takes weeks to months in many cases to start seeing results. Be patient and keep working with your child. Over time, most children will improve. Relapses are common and will require a second course of treatment to get back on track.

Resources

- Seven Steps to Nighttime Dryness by Renee Mercer, CPNP
- The Complete Bedwetting Book by D. Preston Smith, M.D.
- The M.O.P. Book: A Guide to the Only Proven Way to STOP Bedwetting and Accidents by Steve Hodges, M.D.
- www.bedwettingstore.com