

Bedwetting

Ever wondered why your child wets the bed? Bedwetting, also called nocturnal enuresis, is common in children up to five years old; however, bedwetting can occur in older children as well. There are many reasons why children wet the bed. Sometimes the child's bladder is too small. In other cases the child may be a deep sleeper. Bedwetting runs in families, so if a close relative wet the bed as a child there is a good chance your child will wet the bed too.

If your child is younger than five, there is no need to go to the doctor unless the child cannot remain dry both day and night. However, if your child is older than seven and wets the bed two or three times a week, you should consult a doctor. Sometimes wetting the bed can be a symptom of a urinary tract infection, a nerve disease, or diabetes. Be honest with the doctor about your child's bedwetting habits.

The good news is that in most cases bedwetting goes away on its own. There are also some things you can do to help. First, encourage your child to use the bathroom immediately before bedtime. Try to restrict the amount of liquids your child drinks before bedtime, and avoid drinks with lots of caffeine like tea or sodas. Do not excessively restrict fluids, but ask your child to be aware of how much they drink before bed.

Bladder training is another example of a tool that may help your child stop wetting the bed. Record the time and frequency that your child goes to the bathroom. When you have a good idea of your child's habits, encourage your child to wait about 15 minutes longer to use the bathroom.

Moisture alarms also may prevent bedwetting. The alarm goes in the child's bed or underwear. When the alarm senses moisture it will buzz, beep, or vibrate, depending on the type of alarm. This wakes the child so they can stop and go to the restroom. You may need to help your child learn to wake up to the alarm. Be patient! It will take time for your child to learn to wake up in response to a full bladder.

Alternatively, there are medications that temporarily may prevent bedwetting. However, most of these medications are not permanent solutions, and the child begins wetting the bed as soon as the medications are stopped. The important thing to remember is that your child does not wet the bed on purpose. Punishment will not help the child remain dry at night. Ask your child to help remove the soiled sheets and wash them, but do not make this a punishment. Instead, be supportive and encouraging when your child does stay dry. Remember, most children grow out of bedwetting naturally.