

Bedwetting Blues

Bedwetting is a problem for school-age children and their families. Most children have no lasting problems from bedwetting; however, many will feel embarrassed or ashamed.

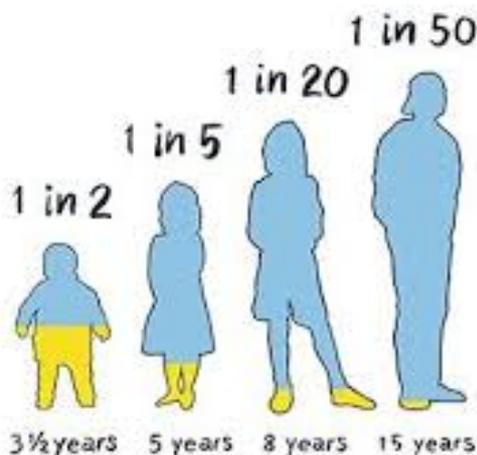
It is important to reassure your child that they are not the only one who wets their bed- there will most likely be other bedwetters in his class.

Causes

Bedwetting is rarely due to attention-seeking. It is far more likely that he has little control or awareness when he is having accidents. Some of the possible factors are:

- genetic tendency (bedwetting tends to run in families; if one or both parents wet the bed when they were children, then it is quite likely their children will too)
- a smallish bladder capacity
- the child is a deep sleeper
- the child's kidneys continue to produce a lot of urine at night (usually, people make less urine when they are asleep).
- constipation (if constipation is causing your child to wet the bed, treating the constipation will help your child to stay dry at night).
- In some rare cases, there may be a medical problem that is the cause of the child's bedwetting.

How common is bedwetting?



Source: UK dri-sleeper.com

Most children do not need rewards to motivate them to take part in treatment – the prospect of a regular dry bed is usually enough.

Charts

It can be helpful to keep a sticker chart of wet and dry nights. Charts used on their own usually have little success, but in combination with other treatments, they can be very useful.

Drinking fluids

It is important for your child to drink plenty of fluids spread evenly throughout the day. Don't try to restrict the amount of fluid your child drinks in the evening, as this will delay the process of being dry at night. Avoid giving drinks containing caffeine (coffee, tea, hot chocolate, caffeinated soft-drinks like cola etc) late at night.

Bedwetting alarms

Research has shown that bedwetting alarms help more than 80 per cent of children to become dry in 6-8 weeks. A child using a bedwetting alarm needs a supportive and helpful family, especially if they are a very deep sleeper.

Medication

DDAVP (also called Minirin) is a medicine that helps a child's body make less urine at night. It will reduce the likelihood of your child's bladder overfilling during sleep. DDAVP is usually reserved for children who have not become dry after using a bedwetting alarm – sometimes the two treatments are given together. Some children use the medication for sleepovers or school camps.

General tips

It is very important to be patient and to encourage your child. Punishing or making fun of your child for wetting the bed will not improve the situation and will increase your child's sense of shame– make sure siblings understand this as well.

Your child needs to be involved in the treatment plan if it is to work. Be very positive on the good nights, and try not to be negative on the bad ones.

If your child is over six years old and bedwetting is causing problems for them (or for you), take them to the GP, especially if they were previously dry overnight.

See The Continence Foundation of Australia website for advice and to find providers of products such as bed protectors, pads or underwear.

Edited from the Royal Children's Hospital Melbourne.