

Talk about bedwetting



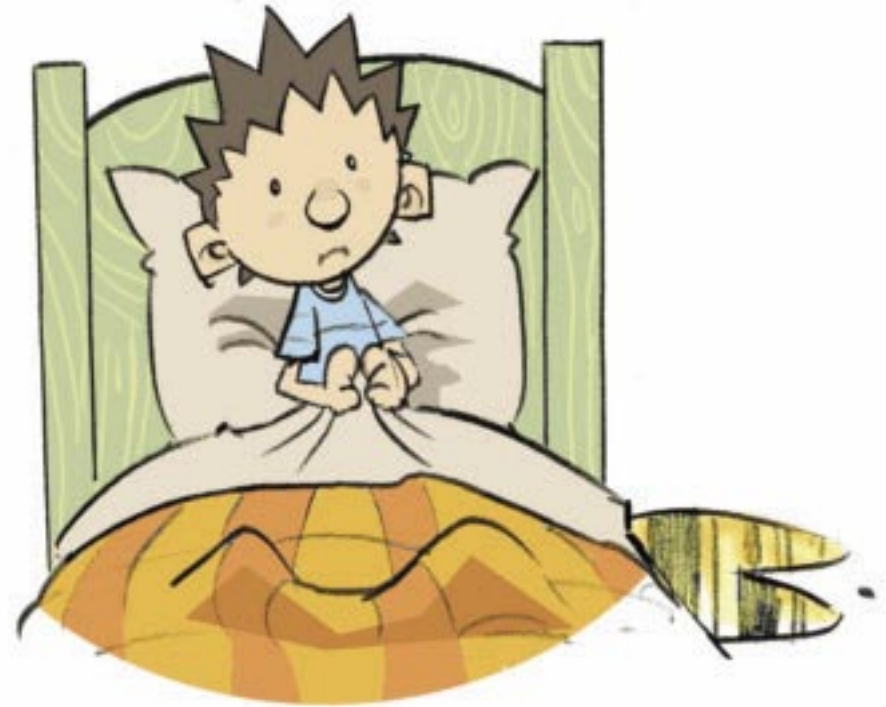
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This booklet has been produced to help children understand about bedwetting. It explains why it happens and how it can be made better.

It is important to remember that bedwetting is not the child's fault and is not caused by anything you or your child has or has not done in the past. This problem can be helped.

Treatments can take time to work and in the meantime wetting can still happen. Once your child is around 5 years old you should avoid using nappies or 'lifting' your child to use the toilet when they are asleep. Encourage your child to have a bath or shower each morning as this will remove the smell of stale urine and avoid the risk of teasing.

Constant bedwetting can make people cross and angry but this can sometimes make the wetting worse. Try and praise your child for their efforts to become dry as often as you can and always ask for more help from your nurse or doctor.



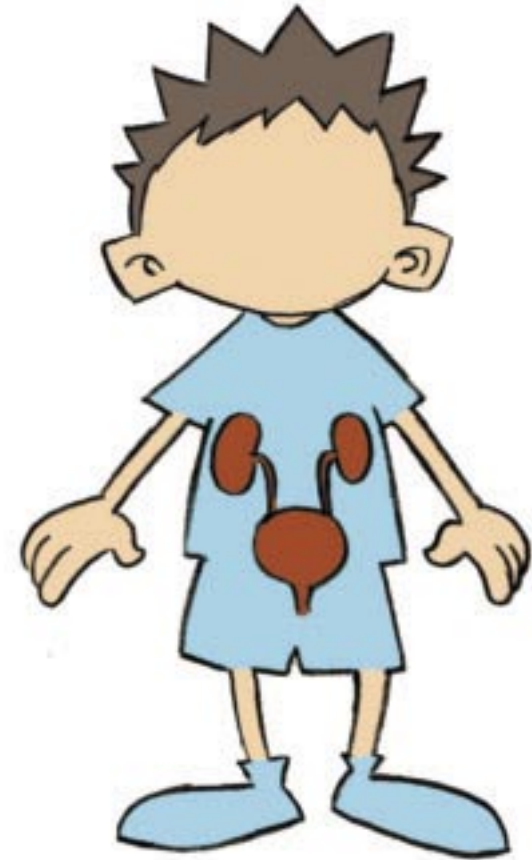
Wetting the bed can make some children feel sad, but bedwetting can be helped. This booklet will tell you how.

What is Nocturnal Enuresis?

Nocturnal enuresis is also called 'bedwetting'. It is a very common problem and affects lots of children over the age of 5 years (about 4 or 5 children in a class of 30) so there maybe someone else in your class who has a problem with wetting the bed as well!

However because no one likes to talk about it you will probably not know who they are - and they will probably not know that you wet the bed either!

Urine (wee) is made in the kidneys and stored in the bladder, which is like a stretchy balloon. When it is full it sends a message to your brain telling you that you need a wee. For children with bedwetting once you go to sleep that message is not loud and clear enough so you don't know you need a wee. As a result you don't wake up and get a wet bed instead!



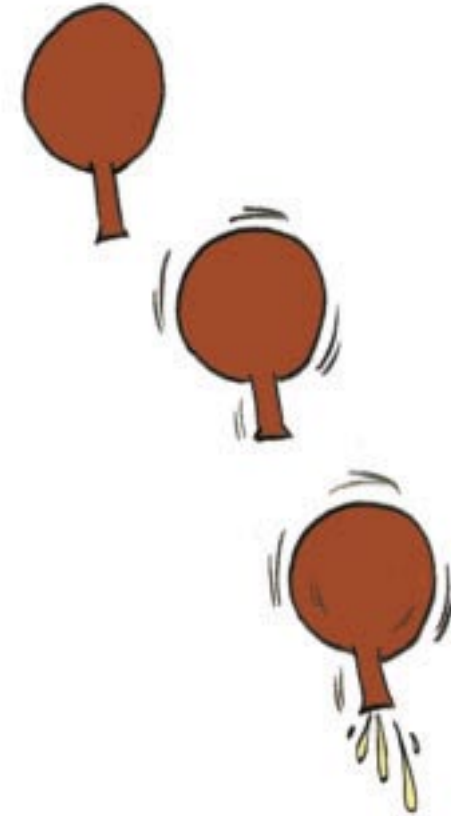
This picture shows your bladder and kidneys

Why does it happen?

Bedwetting can happen for lots of reasons but the main problem is that your bladder is not able to hold on to all the urine (wee) that your kidneys make during the night.

This might be because:

- Your bladder is not big enough to hold on to your wee all night
- Although your bladder is big enough it becomes 'twitchy' and empties before it is full
- Lack of a special chemical messenger called vasopressin which normally tells your kidneys to make less wee overnight. So even if your bladder is a normal size it cannot hold all the extra wee produced



Some bladders are 'twitchy' and empty before they are full!

What else can cause bedwetting?

Constipation

If you are not doing a poo often enough the poo will collect in your bottom and squash against your bladder making it harder to hold on to your wee.

Drinks

Sometimes, if you drink too much of a certain type of drink just before going to bed it can make you wet the bed.

Not waking up

If your full bladder doesn't tell your brain you need to wake up to wee then it will empty without you knowing!

Family history

If either your mum or dad had a problem with bedwetting then there is a chance that they have passed that problem on to you!



constipation



family history



problem with drinks



not waking up

Do you think you wet the bed because of any of these things?

What can help me get better?

Speak to your school nurse, health visitor or doctor who will try to help work out what makes you wet the bed. Knowing what causes the bed wetting can help decide what will make things better.

What can I do to help?

- Make sure you are drinking at least 6 water based drinks each day (such as water or squash) 3 of these should be at school
- Go for a wee before you go to bed and again last thing before you go to sleep if you have been reading or watching TV for a while
- Ask whoever looks after you to leave a potty or bucket in your bedroom if the toilet is a long way away or downstairs
- Make sure you don't get constipated by eating lots of fruit and vegetables and tell someone if you are doing less than 3 poos per week
- We know it is not your fault the bedwetting happens but it is important that you do try hard to get dry by doing the things above and what your nurse or doctor tells you to do



Lots of other things can help you get dry

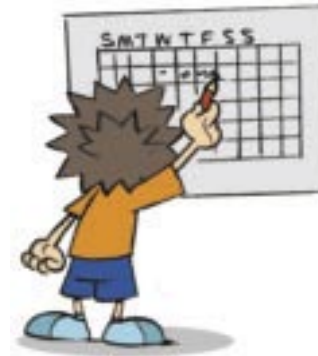
Getting your bladder to work better

If your bedwetting is caused by a problem with your bladder then you will be asked to do things that will help your bladder get bigger and stronger. This is sometimes called 'bladder training'. Your doctor or nurse may also suggest you take some medicine which helps the bladder relax.

What does 'bladder training' involve?

You may be asked to:

- write on a chart whenever you have a wee or a drink
- try different types of drinks to see if any make the bedwetting worse and should be avoided!
- measure how much wee you are doing. You can work out how much your bladder should hold for your age by using the following equation
'your age +1 x 30 = average bladder capacity'
- make sure you have a drink every 2 hours
- go for a wee every 2 hours
- make sure you sit on the toilet properly (for girls) with feet supported on a step or box
- take your time having a wee, to make sure you empty your bladder completely



'Training' your bladder can help you get dry

Medication

Desmopressin

Sometimes medication is prescribed to help with the bedwetting, especially if it is thought you are wetting the bed because not enough vasopressin is being produced.

Desmopressin is the name of the medicine that has the same effect as vasopressin and causes the kidneys to produce a normal night time amount of urine. It comes in either a nasal spray or tablet, although most children find the tablet easier to take.

Desmopressin starts to work straight away and can be taken for as long as it takes for you to become dry. It is normally suggested that you take a break from the tablets every 3 months or so just to check if you still need to take them.

Desmopressin does not always work the same for everyone. Some children get dry with only one tablet other children may need to take 2, your nurse or doctor will tell you the right dose to take.



Some children take medication called desmopressin to help them get dry

Treatments to help get you dry

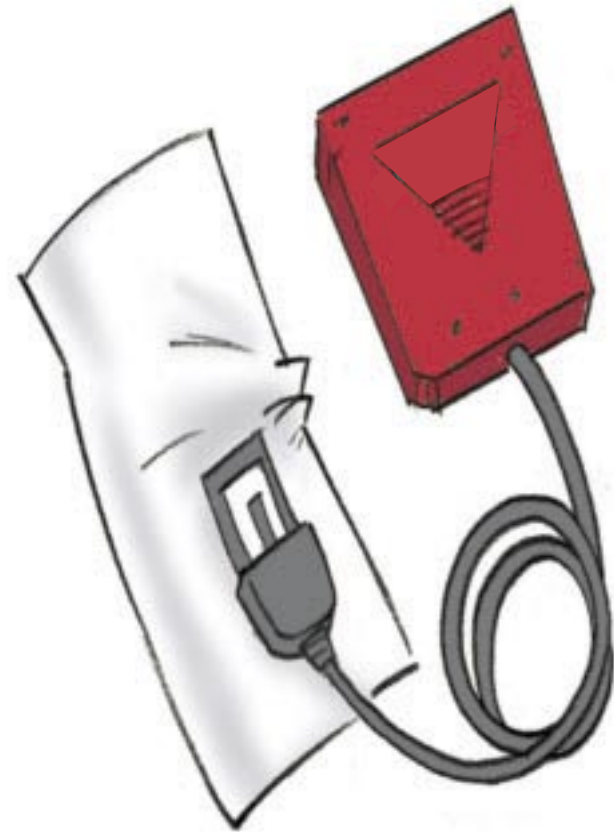
The Enuretic Alarm

The enuretic alarm helps your brain to recognise the signals coming from your bladder when it is full and therefore the need to wake up to go for a wee. It does this by sounding a signal as soon as you start to wet which helps you wake up.

There are two types of enuretic alarm, a mat alarm which goes on the bed, and a smaller body alarm which is clipped to your undies. Your nurse will explain both these alarms to you and you may be able to choose which type of alarm you would like to try.

Once you have been woken by the alarm you have to switch it off before going to the toilet to try and finish weeing. You then need to change any wet bedding and reset the alarm, if necessary, in case you wet again that night.

Sometimes it can take a few weeks before you learn to wake to the noise by yourself and your mum or dad may have to help you wake up at first. It can take several months before you become completely dry. Once you have been dry for about 2 weeks you can have a try without the alarm to see how you get on.



This is a picture of a wetting alarm you wear in your pants when you go to bed

Contact details

Further information

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PromoCon, working as part of Disabled Living Manchester, provides impartial advice and information regarding products and services for children and adults with bowel and/or bladder problems

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Education and Resources for Improving Childhood
Continence

This booklet is part of a series for children with bowel and/or bladder problems.

The booklets give a simple explanation of the problems the child is having. They also give practical advice about how to help.

Titles of other booklets currently available in this series:

'Talk about going to the toilet'

'Talk about constipation'

Illustrations

Les Eaves

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Supported by an educational grant from
Ferring Pharmaceuticals Ltd.



DE/544/12/04
April 2005