



The Children's Doctor

All you need to know about ... Bedwetting



Is bedwetting normal?

Nocturnal enuresis (bedwetting) is normal and very common in children up to 5 years of age. 10% of all children aged 5 will still wet the bed. It is more common in boys than girls and there is often a family history of bedwetting.

Children who wet the bed do not have a fully developed waking response. They are not aware that they are wetting. It is NOT their fault. They are not doing this to irritate you or increase your washing load.

Fluid restriction in the evening does not usually work in these children.

How can I help my child?

Be patient and reassure your child that this is normal and they will grow out of it. Allow your child to have a good night's sleep, don't regularly interrupt their sleep to take them to the toilet. Use nappies/pull-ups/absorbent pads as required to allow your child to sleep peacefully and remain dry. Always wash your child before sending them to school or preschool (the smell of urine can hang around). If you or your child are concerned about the bedwetting, seek medical advice.

When should I seek help?

You should see your doctor if your child has any of the following:

- over 6 years and worried by bedwetting
- has started bedwetting after 12 months of dryness
- has persistent daytime wetting
- has pain/discomfort with urinating

What treatments are available?

Bedwetting alarms are commonly used to wake the child as soon as they start wetting in an attempt to train them to wake when they have the urge to urinate. Often, the alarm will successfully wake the other members of the household whilst the child sleeps through!

Medications are available for short-term management of bedwetting. These can be useful for sleepovers, school camps etc to prevent embarrassment to the child and maintain self-esteem. They are not a cure for bedwetting as wetting recurs when the medications are ceased.

Counselling may be required when a significant event has triggered bedwetting to recur after a significant period of dryness.

Most children will outgrow this problem without any intervention!