

World Bedwetting Day: 25th May 2021

Information for parents/carers

World Bedwetting Day raises awareness of a common, usually treatable condition that can cause stress, embarrassment and a negative impact on family life. The campaign aims to remove the stigma around the topic and help families feel more comfortable discussing bedwetting with their healthcare professional, enabling them to get the help their child needs.



About Bedwetting

- Bedwetting, also known as nocturnal enuresis, is an uncontrollable leakage of urine while asleep in children aged 5 years or over.
- Bedwetting is a common childhood condition, with approximately **5–10% of 7-year-olds** regularly wetting the bed. The problem may persist into teenage and adulthood.
- In most cases, bedwetting is caused by over-production of urine at night or reduced capacity of the bladder. Inability to wake up can be another cause.
- Bedwetting can impact on a child's self-esteem, emotional wellbeing and daytime functioning, including school performance. It's also a source of family stress.

Causes

- Fluids: not drinking enough and/or drinking bladder stimulant fluids, such as caffeine.
- Genetic: if one parent wet the bed, this increases the likelihood the child will by 43%. If both did, it increases by 77%.
- Overactive bladder. Some children may reduce fluid intake to compensate, but this can actually make things worse - see daytime toileting habits.
- Lack of the hormone **vasopressin** which causes decreased urination at night, and other underlying physical conditions.
- Constipation causing pressure on the bladder.
- Urinary tract infection
- Environmental factors, such as darkness, sleeping in bunk beds or the toilet being on another floor.
- Emotions: anxiety/stress/excitement, which could be linked to exams, moving home, new friends, new siblings etc.
- Sleep disorders causing inability to wake.
- Lifestyle changes, such as staying up late to study or increasing fluid late at night when taking part in sports after school.
- Daytime toileting habits e.g. going to the toilet more often than needed, not emptying fully, or reducing fluid intake to prevent urination. The bladder is a muscle which needs to be stretched to increase its capacity.

Bedwetting myths and FAQ

Q. Is my child lazy and choosing to wet the bed?

A. A child will not choose to wet the bed.

Q. Am I to blame for my child bedwetting?

A. Parenting choices are rarely to blame for a child wetting the bed.

Q. Is bedwetting a serious condition?

A. Bedwetting is common and most children will naturally grow out of it. There are many causes for bedwetting, which may be emotional or medical. If bedwetting carries on past 5 years old, medical help and support is available and should be accessed.

Q. Should I stop my child having a drink after 4pm?

A. Reducing drinks can lead to dehydration and reduce the bladder's capacity. This can make bedwetting worse.

Q. Should I wake my child up to use the toilet?

A. Your child needs to recognise when the bladder is signalling to the brain, and learn to respond to this signal. Waking your child up and taking them to the toilet can inhibit this process. Most children receive this signal once they reach a certain age, although some may be older than others when this happens.

Q. Will reassuring my child help to stop the bedwetting?

Getting angry increases your child's embarrassment and often makes the situation worse. Stay calm and be supportive. Reassure your child that you can work through this and find a way to help.

Broken sleep, changing beds and dealing with your child's embarrassment and shame can be very stressful and tiring for the whole family. It's important that your child is reassured that bedwetting is not their fault. Remind them that they are asleep so don't realise what's happening to them.

[Learn more about bedwetting myths](#)

So, what can be done to help with bedwetting?

- Make sure your child is drinking the **right amount of fluid for their age** - throughout the day, not all after school. Most their drinks should be water, with some milk/milk alternative and a small glass of juice per day. Avoid dark fluids and don't give them caffeine. They should have their last drink of the day an hour before bed.
- Teach children to be responsible through positive encouragement. Use a **reward chart/reward system** for all good behaviour (not just dry beds).
- Talk to your GP to rule out constipation and your child holding stools. **This chart** can also help you understand what normal poo looks like and identify constipation.
- Encourage a good sleep pattern by having a consistent, relaxing bed-time routine with no media device before bed.
- Make it easy for them to get to the toilet, for example by providing a nightlight, putting a potty in the room if the toilet is far away, and giving them the bottom bunk.

Activities for children

[Download the 'super' wee and poo colouring sheet.](#)

[Discover why some children have wee worries at bedtime.](#)



Further information and resources

[Bladder and Bowel UK](#)

Information and advice for children and young people with bladder and bowel issues and their parents/carers.

[ERIC, the Children's Bowel & Bladder Charity](#)

Includes a helpline for families, downloadable guides and online information on bowel problems, daytime bladder problems and bedwetting, as well as information specifically for children and young people to help them understand what's happening and what can be done and ease their worries and anxieties. There are also parent/carer workshops.

Support from your Warwickshire School Health & Wellbeing Service

We're here to support you with your child's bedwetting. You can text a nurse via ParentLine on **07520 619 376** or call us on **03300 245 204**. Our office hours are 9-5 Monday to Friday - if you text outside these hours, we'll get back to you once we're back in.

