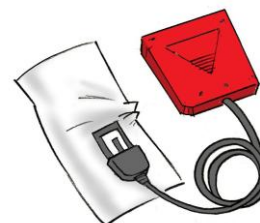




Using a wetting alarm to support a toilet training programme



What does a wetting alarm do?

A wetting alarm is a small device that can be used to help a child and their carer recognise when the child is doing a wee (passing urine). When used during the day alongside a structured toilet training programme, a wetting alarm can help children learn to recognise bladder signals, before they start to wee.

How does a wetting alarm work?

The wetting alarm has a small moisture sensor, linked to a sound box, which is either clipped to the outside of the child's pants, or placed between two pairs of pants (depending on the type of sensor used). When the child starts to wee the sensor detects the wetness and sends a message to the sound box, which makes a noise and/or vibrates, depending on the device used. The support of a health care professional is important to ensure the right toilet training programme is in place and to increase the likelihood that the alarm will be successful.

When would you use the alarm?

The alarm may be useful for children who have been on a toilet training programme, but are struggling to recognise the signals from their bladder that they need to do a wee. It should be used during the day, for as many consecutive days as required and for as much of the day as possible. The child should be closely supervised while using the alarm, as its success depends on a carer consistently taking the child to the toilet as soon as the alarm sounds.

It is a good idea to start using the alarm when the child and carer can have a few consecutive days at home, such as during school holidays. The child should then be comfortable and happy to use it when they are at their nursery, school or care setting. For older children who are making good progress, it may be possible to use the alarm at school.

The practicalities of using an alarm both at home and outside the home setting should always be considered. It may not be appropriate to use the alarm in mainstream schools or public places.

How to use the alarm

It is important that the child understands, as far as possible, what the alarm is for and what will happen when the alarm sounds. This can be explained to the child using social stories and picture cues, as well as role play using a doll or teddy.

Every child is different and it is important that an individualised programme is developed for each child. The basic programme using the wetting alarm is:

- ❖ Put the alarm on as soon as your child wakes in the morning. Put your child in cotton pants. They need to stay in pants throughout the day. Daytime use of nappies or disposable pants during toilet training may be confusing for the child, as it is important that they feel wet every time they have an accident. This reinforces the need to use the potty or toilet
- ❖ Attach the sensor to the outside of your child's pants, or place it between two pairs of pants, depending on the type of sensor used. Attach the sound box to your child's clothes, between their shoulder blades is usually the best place. Thread the wire under their clothes
- ❖ As soon as the alarm goes off, say your child's name and something like "wee wee, toilet now"
- ❖ Take your child straight to the toilet. Turn the alarm off and remove the sensor from their pants
- ❖ Help your child pull their pants down and sit them on the potty/toilet even if you think they have already finished weeing
- ❖ Praise your child for sitting on the potty/toilet and give them extra praise and a small reward (if used) if they manage to do a wee. Your child should be encouraged to sit on the toilet or potty for about one minute for each year of their age while you are encourage them to do a wee. (see Bladder and Bowel UK leaflets on toilet training for ideas on how to introduce sitting on the toilet or potty)
- ❖ To start with your child may have done a complete wee by the time you get them to the toilet, so they are not able to do any more. Still praise them for sitting and in a very neutral voice remind them that wees need to go into the potty or toilet
- ❖ Wipe and dry the sensor, clean your child and help them put on clean clothes. Reconnect the sensor
- ❖ Let them go back to what they were doing before the alarm sounded
- ❖ Repeat the process every time the alarm sounds. Encourage your child to drink well – the more often the alarm sounds the more practice they are getting

Signs of progress

- ❖ Your child is able to stop themselves weeing, as soon as they hear the alarm. When this happens still take them straight to the toilet – they will not be able to hold on for long, this will come later
- ❖ Your child manages to do more wee in the potty/toilet
- ❖ Your child starts to say, sign or otherwise indicate that they need to do a wee

Most children will start to show signs of progress within three to four weeks. We would therefore recommend that you continue with the alarm for at least four weeks. Ask your healthcare professional for support if you feel that your child has made no progress in this time.

For further more advice and information on toilet training visit the Bladder & Bowel UK website at <https://www.bbuk.org.uk/children-young-people/children-resources/> or contact Bladder & Bowel UK on our helpline: telephone 0161 607 8219 or email bbuk@disabledliving.co.uk