



Understanding the Treatment of Bedwetting in Children Under the Age of Seven: The NICE Guidelines

Information for Healthcare Professionals



Management of Bedwetting in children under the age of 7 years

Bedwetting is not considered a medical problem until children are five years old but it may still cause anxiety or stress to families. Historically advice was not offered until children were at least five years old and treatments were often not introduced until the child was at least 7 years old. However, the NICE Guideline CG111 Bedwetting in the under 19s (2010) states that all children, with ongoing wetting problems, who are showing appropriate toileting awareness and behaviour, should be considered for assessment.

Assessment should include bowels in line with the recommendations from the NICE Constipation in children and young people guideline CG99 (2010). Furthermore, modelling indicates that, from the perspective of the NHS, treating children with bedwetting is cost-effective, when compared to not treating, including for children from their fifth birthday, as children who wet frequently at this age are less likely to become dry spontaneously.

What advice and information should be offered to families of younger children with bedwetting?

NICE makes the following recommendations:

- Provide appropriate advice and information while reassuring the family that it is a common problem.
- Assess status of toilet training and offer advice and support, as necessary.
- Consider further assessment of all children who fail to remain dry day or night, despite appropriate toileting behaviour.
- Assess all children for underlying constipation.
- If pull-ups are worn at night suggest trial removal, dependent on the age of the child and family circumstances.
- Offer advice on bed protection and ensure easy access to toilet/potty if child wakes in the night.
- Advise the family to encourage the child to empty their bladder just before going to sleep.
- Review fluid intake and adjust if necessary.
- The use of reward systems for achievable behavioural outcomes such as increasing drinks or remembering to go to the toilet can sometimes have a positive effect.

What first line treatment should be offered if there is still bedwetting at age five years?

NICE states: 'Do not exclude younger children (for example, those under 7 years) from the management of bedwetting on the basis of age alone'.

Treatment of bedwetting has a positive effect on children and young people. Therefore, if initial lifestyle advice and support does not lead to resolution of the problem, then first line treatment options should be offered to all children with bedwetting.

Underlying problems with constipation or daytime lower urinary tract symptoms should be treated first. Any treatments for bedwetting should take into account the child's age, motivation and previous treatment experiences, as well as parental expectations and preferences. Healthcare professionals should offer different treatments and treatment combinations if first-choice treatment is not successful. Children who have not responded to initial treatments should be referred to a specialist service.

Desmopressin is licensed for use in children from age five years. It may be the most appropriate option if the initial assessment suggests nocturnal polyuria and it should be offered where an alarm is considered undesirable, inappropriate or when rapid onset or short-term dryness is a priority.

Alarm treatment should be offered if it is deemed desirable and appropriate. This will depend on family preference as well as the age, maturity, motivation and ability of the child. An alarm would be considered inappropriate the family are struggling with the

emotional burden of bedwetting or are expressing anger, negativity or blame towards the child.

Where can I get more information?

There is more information about bedwetting available on the Bladder & Bowel UK website at www.bbuk.org.uk. Information for professionals is available at <https://www.bbuk.org.uk/professionals-resources/>. Information for children and families is available at <https://www.bbuk.org.uk/bladder-resources/>. All the information is free to download and print.

There is also information for families at www.stopbedwetting.org

Bladder & Bowel UK produce an electronic newsletter, 'Enuresis Update', about recent research on the causes and treatments of bedwetting that is available to healthcare professionals. To be added to the mailing list complete the web form at <https://www.bbuk.org.uk/helpline-enquiries/> with your work contact details and ask to be added to our mailing list. You may also request our electronic professional's newsletter.

Bladder & Bowel UK offer bespoke and national training days for professionals. Contact us for more information about bespoke training. Details of Bladder & Bowel UK training is also available from <https://www.bbuk.org.uk/professionals/professionals-training/>

Bladder & Bowel UK provide a confidential helpline to professionals, those who have bladder and bowel conditions and their families via the web form at <https://www.bbuk.org.uk/helpline-enquiries/> or **Telephone 0161 214 4591**

For further information about **Bladder & Bowel UK** services and resources visit our website at www.bbuk.org.uk

This booklet can be freely downloaded and printed as a whole. However, no part of this document may be copied or distributed without the authors' permission.

Copyright © Bladder & Bowel UK
Disabled Living 2021
Registered Charity No 224742

