

Information for children

What is bedwetting?

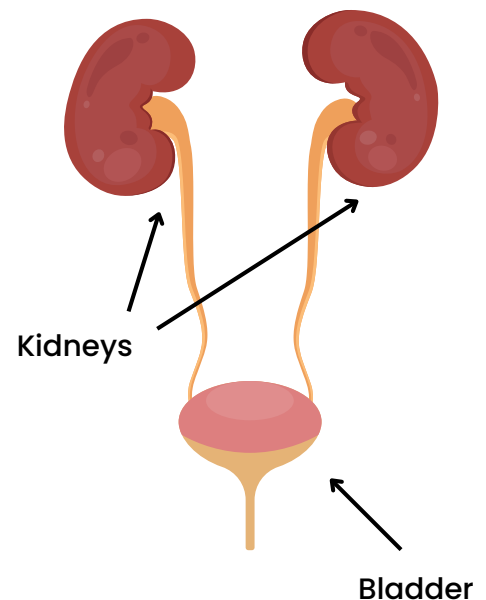
Bedwetting is when you wee while you are asleep. It is not your fault.

Why do some children wet the bed?

Children who wet the bed cannot wake up when they need a wee. So, their bladder empties and the bed gets wet.

Bedwetting can run in families. If a close relative had bedwetting, they may have passed the problem on to you.

Not doing a poo often enough, or not managing to get all the poo out, means poo will collect in your bottom. This will squash against your bladder. This is constipation. Constipation makes it difficult for your bladder to hold on to your wee.



Why do some children need to wee at night?

Most children sleep all night without needing a wee. Some children have a bladder that is too small to hold all the wee their kidneys make while they are asleep.

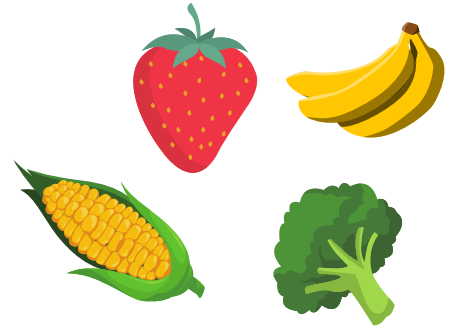
Some children have a bladder that wants to empty before it is full. If this is happening in the day as well, they may have to run to the toilet, or get damp pants on the way to the toilet.

If these children cannot wake up at night to go to the toilet, their bed will get wet.

What can you try that might help?

- Eat lots of fruit and vegetables. This will help you to poo. Tell someone if you poo less than 3 times a week. Tell someone if it hurts when you poo. Tell someone if you feel as if the poos are getting stuck.

- Drinking too much before you go to sleep can cause bedwetting. Try not to drink for an hour before you go to sleep.
- If you do not drink enough during the day your bladder may learn to only hold small amounts of wee. Drink 6 – 8 water-based drinks each day (including 3 at school).
- Fizzy drinks and drinks with caffeine can make you more likely to wet the bed. Tea, coffee, hot chocolate, energy drinks and coke have caffeine in them. Try to avoid having them, especially in the evenings.
- Go for a wee before you go to sleep. Having an empty bladder when you go to sleep might help stop the bedwetting.
- Try not to eat foods with lots of salt or protein in the hour before you go to sleep. Salt and protein make your body make more wee.
- Too much screen time can make bedwetting worse. Try to stop using screens in the hour before you go to sleep. Try not to use screens for more than two hours a day. (This is as well as any time spent on screens for school work).



What if these don't work?

Your school nurse, health visitor or doctor can help work out what causes the bedwetting for you. They will help you and your parents or carer decide which treatment to try.

What will the nurse or doctor do?

The nurse or doctor will ask lots of questions. This will help them find out why the bedwetting happens.

They may ask you to measure your drinks and wees for two or three days and write this down on a chart. They might ask about your poos. They will talk to you about what might help.

What treatments are there?

Children can use an enuresis (bedwetting) alarm or a medicine to help with bedwetting.



The enuresis alarm

The enuresis alarm helps your brain notice signals from your bladder when you are asleep. It does this by making a noise as soon as you start to wee. The noise helps you wake up.

When you are awake you should switch the alarm off. Then you need to go to the toilet to try and wee. You need to do this, even if you think that you have finished weeing. If you don't wake up straight away, then your mum, dad or carer will need to wake you up.

When you have been to the toilet you need to change any wet bedding. Then go back to sleep.

It can take several weeks to get dry. When you have been dry every night for 28 nights, you can stop using the alarm.

Medicine

Desmopressin is a medicine that helps your kidneys make less wee at night.

It comes as a liquid, a melt (a special tablet that dissolves in your mouth) or a tablet.

Desmopressin may start to work straight away. You can take it for twelve weeks and then need to have one week without it. If you are dry in the week without desmopressin, you do not need it anymore.

Your nurse or doctor will talk to you about whether the liquid, melt or tablet is best for you. They will tell you how much to take. Do not take more than they tell you to take.

If you take desmopressin you must not drink for one hour before you have it and for eight hours after it. You should be asleep after you take it. You must not take it if you are ill.

Always follow the instructions that come in the box with it and ask your doctor or nurse if you are not sure.

What happens if the alarm or medicine do not work?

If one thing does not work, do not give up. Talk to your nurse or doctor and ask what else you can try. It can take time for bedwetting to get better.

Information for parents and families

Bedwetting is not your child's fault. It is not caused by anything you or your child has or has not done. Help is available.

You can try the things suggested in this leaflet from any age. An alarm or desmopressin should be available for children from five years old. It can take time to work. Sometimes bedwetting starts again after treatment. If this happens ask for more support.

Do not stop your child drinking during the day. This may cause more bladder problems and constipation.

Do not wake your child to take them to the toilet during the night. This may make them tired and does not cure bedwetting.

There is more information in the Bladder & Bowel UK leaflet [Understanding Bedwetting](#).



Further information

Find more information about child bladder and bowel health in our [information library](#). You can also contact the Bladder & Bowel UK [confidential helpline](#) (0161 214 4591).

For further advice on bladder and bowel problems speak to your GP or other healthcare professional.

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