

My child wets the bed, when to seek advice?

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What is enuresis/bed-wetting?

The word enuresis usually refers to urinating while asleep in an age when this should not take place. There are different reasons, some are unknown, which make a healthy child urinate at night when they are more than five. It has been connected with:

- Heredity: it is frequent that some close relative suffers from enuresis
- Higher production of urine at night: This may be due to an excessive amount of liquids before going to bed or at night or for some other reasons.
- They are not able to get up when they want to urinate.
- Psychological problems: child's stress due to familiar or scholar conflicts, being jealous because of the birth of a sibling, etc can cause enuresis in a child who did not wet their bed.
- Having the continuous sensation of urinating as it can happen to children with chronic constipation.

How to face this problem from home?

- Give them rewards for their dry nights and for the progresses, even if they are minimal (being dry after a nap, getting up to urinate, try not to use the nappy to feel older).
- Child motivation can be enhanced with a calendar of dry and wet nights. Every dry night, a sun can be drawn and if a specific number of suns is reached (more when the child progresses) a small prize will be given. If you notice that your child does not improve, do not insist of keeping this calendar because this may be frustrating for the child.
- Tell your child that he is not guilty, that this is a transitory state and although not said at school, many children have this kind of problems.
- Use a protector under or over the sheets to avoid uncomfortable situations and bad smell.
- Let your child help you to change the wet linen but not as a punishment.

- Make sure that nobody in your family mocks the child.
- Ask your child to urinate before going to bed and make sure they avoid to drink high amount of liquid before going to bed or at night.
- It is not efficient to practice with your child so that when he feels like urinating, he tries to wait a bit more.
- It is inefficient to stop your child when urinating and it can cause gall bladder problems.
- It is equally inefficient to wake them up to urinate one or two hours after falling asleep.

When must I go to the doctor?

You must go to the doctor when you notice that your son is worried about enuresis or when parents are afraid of its consequences. Many parents do not go to the doctor until late because they also wetted their beds and think this is a normal behaviour for children. They do not know that there are efficient treatments that can help their children or they may not have been treated this way. Five years old is the earliest age to start with a treatment although every child is different, as well as the circumstances. We must also go to the doctor if:

- Enuresis occurs in a child who has not wetted the bed for more than six consecutive months.
- There are changes in the amount or frequency of urination during the day.
- Urinating causes pain, itch or difficulties. The urine is dirty, it smells bad or if there are blood spots in underwear.
- There are urine leaks during the day, except if the cause is due to concentration on a game or TV.
- Sudden change in personality or state of mind.

What treatments are available? Are they efficient?

The treatment with an alarm (a device which produces a sound or vibrates when the first drops of urine are expelled) is the most efficient one. However, an extra effort

has to be made and collaboration between the family and the child is needed. Keeping your child motivated in the treatment period is essential and it must be done under the supervision of a qualified person.

Medicine may only help in concrete situations.

The youngest children who wet their beds some nights per week or at weekends are the most likely to get cured on their own or with the stimulus of motivation (calendar of dry and wet nights).

It is important to know that, no matter what treatment is followed, most times some months are necessary to eliminate enuresis. Some problems may occur and some changes in the treatment may be needed.

There are no data to calculate the age when enuresis will not happen any more.

When nothing works, we must think that only 1 out of 100 adults keep wetting their beds and so, the problem will be solved as time goes by. In the meantime, the most comfortable solution must be followed.