

## Coping With Bedwetting

Night time bed-wetting is common among preschoolers. About 40% of 3 year olds wet the bed at night. Maybe his bladder is not developed enough to hold urine for a full night. He may not be able to know when his bladder is full and wake up to use the toilet.

Sometimes, a child under stress starts wetting the bed after he has been dry at night. The stress can be a move, divorce or big changes in the child's life and routine. Physical or sexual abuse could be a cause.

Bed-wetting is stressful for the child and the parent. A doctor can help parents find answers to why their child wets the bed at night. The doctor may ask the following questions.

- Is there a family history of bed-wetting?
- How often does your child urinate?
- When does your child wet the bed? Is she very active, upset or under unusual stress when it happens?
- Does your child tend to wet the bed after drinking soda, caffeine, citrus juice or water?
- Is there anything unusual about how your child urinates or the way his urine looks?

Your doctor will want to rule out any disease, infection or defects. He may do some tests. Until your child outgrows bed-wetting, be very sensitive to her feelings. She needs your support.

- Make your child understand that bed-wetting *is not his fault*.
- Set a *no teasing rule* in the family.



- Do not make an issue of bed-wetting when it happens. Do not show disappointment or disgust. Let her know it will get better in time.
- Understand if your child does not want to spend the night at a friend's house or go to camp.
- Make sure your child uses the toilet before bedtime.
- Help your child avoid drinking large amounts of liquid before she goes to bed.
- Use a plastic or rubber cover between the sheet and mattress. It will help prevent smells.
- Teach your child to change his wet sheets and covers. This may help your child avoid embarrassment. *Do not use this as a punishment. In fact, if your child sees this as a punishment, stop.*
- Talk to your doctor about other ways to help your child, such as bed-wetting alarm devices. Your child should be a least 7 or 8 before trying the alarm device system.

Bed-wetting is so common that ads offer so-called cures. Be very careful. Your doctor can help you decide what is good and what is not.

Parents knew very little about bed-wetting years ago. They used shame, spanking and humiliation as ways to stop their child from wetting the bed. Children carry the scars of such sad treatment into their adulthood. If your child has a bed-wetting problem, seek help and provide love and encouragement.

*Brought to you by Parent Help Line and St. John's Children's Hospital*



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1-217-544-5808 or 1-888-727-5889, 10 a.m. to 10 p.m., 7 days a week  
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