



Bedwetting is an issue that millions of families face every night. It is extremely common among young children but can last into the teen years.

Doctors don't know for sure what causes bedwetting or why it stops. But it is often a natural part of development, and children usually grow out of it. Most of the time bedwetting is not a sign of any deeper medical or emotional issues.

All the same, bedwetting can be very stressful for families. Children can feel embarrassed and guilty about wetting the bed and anxious about spending the night at a friend's house or at camp. Parents often feel helpless to stop it.

Bedwetting may last for a while, but providing emotional support and reassurance can help your child feel better until it stops.

Nocturnal enuresis, the medical name for bedwetting, is a common problem in children, especially children under 6 years old. About 13% of 6-year-olds wet the bed, while about 5% of 10-year-olds do.

Bedwetting often runs in families: many children who wet the bed have a relative who did, too. If both parents wet the bed when they were young, it's very likely that their child will.

Bedwetting usually goes away on its own. But until it does, it can be embarrassing and uncomfortable for your child. So it's important to provide support and positive reinforcement during this process.

Reassure your child that bedwetting is a normal part of growing up and that it's not going to last forever. It may comfort your child to hear about other family members who also struggled with it when they were young.

Remind your child to go to the bathroom one final time before bedtime. Try to have your child drink more fluids during the daytime hours and less at night. Avoid caffeine-containing drinks. Some parents try waking their children in the middle of the night to use the bathroom. Many also find that using a motivational system, such as stickers for dry nights with a small reward (such as a book) after a certain number of stickers, can work well. Bedwetting alarms also can be helpful.

When your child wakes with wet sheets, don't yell or spank him or her. Have your child help you change the sheets. Explain that this isn't punishment, but it is a part of the process. It may even help your child feel better knowing that he or she helped out. Offer praise when your child has a dry night.

Bedwetting that begins abruptly or is accompanied by other symptoms can be a sign of another medical condition, so talk with your doctor.

The doctor may check for signs of a urinary tract infection (UTI), constipation, bladder problems, diabetes, or severe stress.

Call the doctor if your child:

- suddenly starts wetting the bed after being consistently dry for at least 6 months
- begins to wet his or her pants during the day
- starts misbehaving at school or at home
- complains of a burning sensation or pain when urinating
- has to urinate frequently
- is drinking or eating much more than usual
- has swelling of the feet or ankles
- your child is still wetting the bed at age 7 years

Also let the doctor know if you're feeling frustrated with the situation or could use some help. In the meantime, your support and patience can go a long way in helping your child feel better about the bedwetting.

Remember, the long-term outlook is excellent and in almost all cases dry days are just ahead.