

## What kinds of medicines are used for treatment?

Your doctor may give your child medication if your child is 7 years of age or older and behavior therapy hasn't worked. But medicines aren't a cure for bedwetting. One kind of medicine helps the bladder hold more urine and another kind helps the kidneys make less urine. These medicines may have side effects. Check with your doctor for a list of the possible effects.

## Coping with bedwetting

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

## How can I help my child feel not so bad about bedwetting?

Bedwetting can lead to behavioral problems because of the guilt and embarrassment a child feels. Although your child should take responsibility for bedwetting, your child shouldn't be mad to feel guilty about something he or she couldn't control. It's important that your child knows that bedwetting isn't his or her fault. Punishing your child for wetting the bed will not solve the problem.

## When to talk to your child's doctor

In rare cases, when bedwetting begins abruptly and is accompanied by other symptoms, it can be a sign of another medical condition and you may want to consult your child's doctor. The doctor may check for signs of a urinary tract infection, constipation, bladder problems, diabetes or severe stress.

It's a good idea to call your doctor if your child suddenly starts wetting the bed after being consistently dry for at least 6 months. You may also want to contact the doctor if your child begins to wet his or her pants during the day, starts misbehaving at school or home or if your child complains of a burning sensation when he/she goes to the washroom.

In the meantime, your support and patience can go a long way in helping your child feel better about bedwetting. Remember that the long-term outlook is excellent, and in almost all cases, dry days are just around the bend.

**Most boys can control their bladder during the day and night by the age of 6, and most girls by the age of 5.**



# Why Does My Child Wet the Bed?



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# Bedwetting

Bedwetting is an issue that millions of families face every night. It is extremely common in kids who are under the age of 6, and it can last into the pre-teen years. Doctors don't know for sure what causes bedwetting or why it stops, but it is considered a natural part of development and kids eventually 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. Kids can feel embarrassed and guilty about wetting the bed. Parents often feel helpless to stop it. There may not be any way for you to cure your child's bedwetting, but the emotional support and reassurance you provide can help your child feel better until the bedwetting goes away on its own.

## How common is bedwetting?

Primary enuresis, the medical term for bedwetting, typically starts when kids are toddlers. It is very common for kids who are 6 years old or younger. About 15% of 6 year olds wet the bed and about 5% of 10 year olds wet the bed.

Bedwetting often runs in families. Most kids who wet the bed had a relative that did that too. If both parents wet the bed when they were young, it's very likely that their child will as well.

## What causes bedwetting?

Some of the causes of bedwetting include the following:

- Genetic factors
- Difficulties waking up from sleep
- Slower than normal development of the central nervous system—this reduces the child's ability to stop the bladder from emptying at night
- Hormonal factors (not enough antidiuretic hormone—this hormone reduces the amount of urine made by the kidneys)
- Urinary tract infections
- Abnormalities in the urethral valves in the boys or the ureter in girls or boys
- Abnormalities in the spinal cord
- Inability to hold urine for a long time because of a small bladder

**The condition of bedwetting occurs in 30% of children at the age of 4, 10% of children that are the age of 6 and drops to 1% at the age of 18.**

## When do most children achieve bladder control?

Children achieve bladder control at different ages. By the age of 5 years, most children no longer urinate in their sleep. Bedwetting up to the age of 5 is not unusual, even though it may be frustrating to parents. Treating a child for bedwetting before the age of 5 is not necessary and may even be harmful to the child.

## What are the treatments for bedwetting?

Most children outgrow bedwetting without treatment. However, you and your doctor may decide your child needs treatment. There are 2 kinds of treatment: behavior therapy and medicine. Behavior therapy helps teach your child not to wet the bed. Some behavior treatments include the following:

- An alarm system rings when the bed gets wet and teaches the child to respond to bladder sensations at night
- A reward system for dry nights
- Asking your child to change the bed sheets when they are wet
- Bladder training: have your child practice holding his or her urine for