



# Bed Wetting

Most children stop wetting the bed as they get older, but there are several things you can try in the meantime.

## Offer plenty of drinks during the day:

Giving your child less to drink during the day isn't the way to cut down on their bedwetting. If you do, your child's bladder will adapt to hold less wee and won't learn how to cope with the amount of fluid they need to stay healthy

- Make sure your child has enough to drink during the day, 6-8 drinks, starting with a drink with their breakfast.
- By 5pm, they should have had at least 5 drinks.
- It's best to avoid drinks for an hour before bedtime.
- Don't leave a drink by their bedside when you put them to bed.
- Avoid drinks that contain caffeine, such as coke, tea or hot chocolate, because they increase the urge to wee.

## Encourage regular toilet breaks:

Encourage your child to go to the toilet regularly during the day. Make sure your child has a wee before going to bed and can get to the toilet easily during the night. Make sure the potty or toilet is easy to reach - you could leave your child's trainer seat on the toilet overnight. If you have bunk beds, use the bottom bunk so your child can get out easily. If your child is afraid of the dark, put a dim night light by their bed or leave the bathroom light on.

## Try a reward scheme:

Bedwetting isn't something your child can control, so rewards shouldn't be based on whether they wet the bed or not.

Instead, you may want to give rewards for things like:

- having plenty of drinks during the day
- remembering to have a wee before bed

If your reward scheme isn't working after about a week, it's best to stop and try something else.

It's important not to punish your child or withdraw treats if they wet the bed. This could put them under more stress, which could lead to more bedwetting, not less.

**Bedding:**

- Protect your child's mattress with a waterproof cover and consider using a waterproof duvet cover or tuck in bed pads -they cover part of the bottom sheet and are easy to remove for washing.
- Keep a supply of clean bedding handy for changing the sheets in the night.
- Older children may want to change their own bedding at night, so make sure they have clean bedding and nightclothes handy.

**Causes of bedwetting:**

There's usually no obvious reason why children wet the bed, but it could be because your child:

- produces more wee than their bladder can cope with
- has an overactive bladder, meaning it can only hold a small amount of wee
- is a very deep sleeper, so they don't react to the signals telling their brain their bladder is full

Bedwetting often runs in families.

Constipation is often linked with bedwetting. Sometimes treating constipation is all that's needed to treat bedwetting.

Occasionally, bedwetting is triggered by emotional distress, such as being bullied or moving to a new school.

In rare cases, bedwetting may be a symptom of an underlying health condition, such as type 1 diabetes.

**Stay calm when your child wets the bed**

Your child may feel ashamed of their bedwetting, so it's important to show them you don't blame them.

Bedwetting isn't something they're doing deliberately. Don't punish them for it, as that can add stress to an already difficult situation.

You may find getting up in the night to help your child and seeing them upset quite stressful.

Changing the sheets during the night and washing them the next day is a lot of extra work and will add to your laundry costs, so it's not surprising that some parents feel resentful.

### **Bedwetting and anxiety:**

If your child has been dry at night for more than 6 months and then starts wetting the bed, this is called secondary bedwetting.

This kind of bedwetting often starts when your child is worried or anxious about something.

It might follow a change in your child's routine or environment, such as the arrival of a new baby, moving house or starting nursery.

It might be linked to stress in the family, such as bereavement or you and your partner separating.

If you think this might be a reason for your child's bedwetting, you may feel guilty about it.

But your child's bedwetting isn't your fault and there are things you can do to help them.

This may be giving them practical support to help them stay dry at night, or reassurance to help them cope with change.

You can get advice from your health visitor or GP. They may refer your child to a specialist if further help is needed.

