



Kiwi Pediatrics

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BEDWETTING

Key points

Nocturnal enuresis (bedwetting) is normal in young children.

Every child will develop bladder control at their own pace.

Punishment for bedwetting does not help a child to develop bladder control.

Bedwetting typically occurs as a child is deeply asleep and does not wake to their bladder signalling that it is full.

Bedwetting frequently runs in families

Sometimes bedwetting can be a sign of another problem (see below).

Management options

Bedwetting usually resolves on its own with time. If it is causing distress for the child there are options that may help. The most effective is a bedwetting pad and alarm system. This helps “train” the child to wake when the bladder signals it is full. As most children will sleep through the alarm this treatment relies on the parents to wake and then wake the child to use the bathroom.

There are medications that can be taken orally (by mouth) to reduce the amount of urine produced over night. There are very specific safety rules that need to be in place when using these medications. Please discuss these with your physician if an oral medication is recommended.

One approach often used is to reduce fluid intake at night. This may help to reduce bedwetting but it is important that a child's hydration is maintained. A child needs to drink adequate water in the day for the bladder to learn to relax and hold an increasing volume of urine. If a child is not drinking enough their bladder capacity drops and they are more likely to wet the bed.

It is normal for parents to feel frustrated with the situation but try to remember that the bedwetting is not something the child has control over.

When to seek medical help

If your child has daytime symptoms such as wetting, pain with peeing or blood in the pee please talk to your doctor as this may require further investigation.

Talking to your doctor if your child has developed bedwetting after a period of being dry at night is also recommended.

