

## Teen info- What Is Enuresis?

Alex falls into an extremely deep sleep almost every night. He sleeps so soundly that you could set off a fire alarm next to his bed and he probably wouldn't hear it. Even having to pee doesn't wake him up, so Alex sometimes wets the bed. He feels embarrassed, but isn't alone — this problem affects about 1–2 out of every 100 teens.

The medical name for not being able to control your pee is **enuresis**. Sometimes enuresis is also called involuntary urination. Nocturnal enuresis is involuntary urination that happens at night while sleeping, Involuntary urination that happens during the day is known as diurnal enuresis.

There are two kinds of enuresis: primary and secondary.

Someone with primary nocturnal enuresis has wet the bed since they were a baby and has never been dry for longer than 6 months at a time .(This is the most common form).

Secondary enuresis is a condition that develops at least 6 months (or sometimes even several years) after a person has learned to control their bladder.

The bladder is a holding container for urine. It is made up of muscle and can stretch as it fills with urine and then contracts to push the urine out.

Nerves in the bladder wall send a message to the brain when the bladder is full; the brain then sends a message back to the bladder to keep it from automatically emptying until the person is ready to go to the bathroom. But people with nocturnal enuresis have a problem that causes them to pee involuntarily at night

## What Causes Enuresis?

Doctors don't always know the exact cause of nocturnal enuresis. They do have some theories, though, on what may contribute to someone developing the condition:

- **Hormonal problems.** An anti-diuretic hormone, called vasopressin causes the body to produce less urine at night and concentrates the urine that is produced. Some people don't make enough of this hormone, which means their bodies may produce too much urine while they're sleeping.

- **Bladder problems.** Muscle spasms can stop the bladder holding as much urine as would otherwise be possible. Some teens and adults also have relatively small bladders that limits the volume of urine they can hold on to. We can improve this through bladder training- increasing the amount of water based drinks you have every day, and encouraging you to pass urine regularly.
- **Genetics.** Teens with enuresis often have a parent who had the same problem at about the same age. Scientists have identified specific genes that cause enuresis.
- **Sleep problems.** Some teens may sleep so deeply that they don't wake up when they need to pee. Bladder training and the use of an alarms can help with managing this.
- **Caffeine.** Using caffeine causes a person to pass urine more often.
- **Medical conditions.** Medical conditions that can trigger secondary enuresis include urinary tract infections, and constipation.
- **Psychological problems.** Some experts believe that stress can be associated with enuresis. It's not uncommon to feel stressed out during the teenage years, and things such as divorce, the death of a friend or family member, a move to a new town and adapting to a new school and social environment, or family tension can feel overwhelming.

Doctors don't know exactly why, but more than twice as many boys as girls have enuresis.

## How Is Enuresis Diagnosed?

If you're having trouble controlling your urine , talk to your doctor or nurse to learn more about enuresis and to rule out the possibility of any medical problem.

The doctor/nurse may ask you about any concerns and symptoms you have, your past health, your family's health, any medications you're taking, any allergies you may have, and other issues. He or she may ask about sleep patterns, bowel habits, and urinary symptoms (such as an urge to pee a lot or pain or burning when you pee). They may also discuss any stressful situations that could be contributing to the problem.

## How Is It Treated?

There are several things to treat bedwetting, depending on what's causing it.

If an illness is responsible (which is not very common) it will be treated. If the history and physical examination do not suggest a specific medical problem and the urine tests are negative, several behavioral approaches can be used for treatment:

- **Manage what you eat and drink before bed.** People with nocturnal enuresis can take some basic steps to prevent having an overly full bladder overnight, by decreasing the amount of fluids they drink before going to bed. You can reduce the chances that you'll wet the bed by going to the toilet just before bedtime.

It may help to avoid having certain drinks – drinks that can irritate the bladder include coffee, tea, hot chocolate, (anything containing caffeine) ,fizzy drinks, or those containing red berries(blackcurrant, strawberry. raspberry etc)

- **Imagine yourself dry.** Using a technique called positive imagery, where you think about waking up dry before you go to sleep, can help some people stop bedwetting. Some people find that rewarding themselves for waking up dry also works.
- **Use bedwetting alarms.** Sometimes bedwetting alarms are used to treat teens with night time enuresis. According to the National Kidney Foundation, 50% to 70% of cases of enuresis respond to treatment with these moisture alarms. With these alarms, a buzzer goes off when a person begins to wet the bed. Then, you can quickly turn the alarm off, go to the toilet, and go back to sleep without wetting the bed too much. Don't get discouraged if the alarm doesn't help you stop wetting the bed immediately, though. It can take weeks for the body to unlearn something it's been doing for years. Eventually, you can train yourself to get up before the alarm goes off or to hold your urine until morning.

People who sleep very deeply, may initially need to rely on a parent or other family member to wake them up if they don't hear the alarm. The key to bedwetting alarms is waking up quickly — the sooner a person wakes up, the more effective the behavior modification for telling the brain to wake up or send the bladder signals to hold the urine until the morning.

- Sometimes doctors treat enuresis with **medication** — although this is not usually the first course of action because no medicine has been proved to cure bedwetting permanently, you might be prescribed a man made form of the hormone to decrease urine buildup during the night. Other medications relax the bladder, allowing it to hold more pee.

If you're worried about enuresis, the best thing to do is talk to your doctor or nurse for ideas on how to cope with it. Your parents or carers may also give you tips on how to cope, especially if they have had the problem themselves in during adolescence.

The good news is that it's likely that bedwetting will go away on its own. In fact, 15 out of 100 kids who wet the bed will stop every year without any treatment at all.

Adapted from <https://kidshealth.org/en/teens/enuresis.html>