



IS BEDWETTING A PROBLEM IN TEENAGERS AND YOUNG ADULTS?

About two out of every one hundred teenagers and young adults wet the bed at night. This is called **nocturnal enuresis**. It can be a problem for both young men and women. Most teenagers and young adults who wet the bed have done so since they were a child. Some may have had help as a child but many young people have never had help with this problem. They may think bedwetting will get better with time. They may think that it can't be helped.

Some young people with bedwetting also have daytime bladder problems. They may:

- pass urine more often than normal
- feel the need to go more urgently than normal
- leak urine as they hurry to the toilet (also called overactive bladder).

Bedwetting can make everyday life more difficult. Teenagers and young adults may be embarrassed by this problem. They may fear that people will find out. They can also have the expense and workload of extra washing. It can be tricky to stay away from home overnight. There can also be problems when you need to share a bed or room with someone else. A big worry is what bedwetting can mean for close personal relationships.

IS HELP AVAILABLE FOR BEDWETTING?

The good news is that you can get help. Bedwetting can often be cured after careful review and treatment. It can be cured even if past treatment did not help.

Even when it cannot be cured, you can reduce symptoms and keep bedding dry.

WHAT CAUSES BEDWETTING IN TEENAGERS AND YOUNG ADULTS?

Wetting the bed is caused by a mix of three things:

1. The body making a large amount of urine through the night.
2. Having a bladder that can only store a small amount of urine at night.
3. Not being able to fully wake up from sleep.

Some teenagers and young adults also have bladder problems through the day. Their bladder does not store or empty properly at night or in the day.

We now know more about the causes of bedwetting, such as:

- bedwetting can run in some families
- some bladders can't store much urine through the day or night
- some bladders do not fully empty on the toilet, which means some urine stays in the bladder
- some kidneys make larger amounts of urine than normal through the night.

CAN THERE BE OTHER REASONS FOR BEDWETTING IN TEENAGERS AND YOUNG ADULTS?

Some other things can make it hard to control bedwetting, such as:

- constipation
- infection in the kidney or bladder
- drinking too many drinks with caffeine or alcohol
- the use of some medicines and illegal drugs
- allergies or enlarged adenoids and tonsils which block the nose or upper airways at night.

HOW CAN BEDWETTING BE HELPED?

Research has led to new types of treatment. Bedwetting in teenagers and young adults can be more complex than in children. You must talk to a health professional with special training in bladder problems. You should see a doctor, continence nurse advisor or continence physiotherapist. This health professional will review the problem. They will do a physical check and some tests. One test may check how well your urine flows. For this test you pass urine in private into a toilet. Another test can check if your bladder empties out fully. You may also be asked to do a bladder diary at home.

Treatment will depend on what was found in the check up, but could include:

- treatment of constipation
- treatment of bladder infection
- giving medicines to boost how much urine your bladder can hold
- giving medicines to cut down how much urine is made through the night
- training to control how well the bladder stores and empties urine
- use of an alarm that goes off when the bed or underwear becomes wet. This can be useful for teenagers and young adults as well as children, even if used before unsuccessfully. Alarms may be used in combination with medicines
- use of continence products to protect bedding and skin
- use of products to reduce odour and increase comfort during treatment
- a mix of some of the above treatments.

HOW CAN YOU HAVE A BETTER CHANCE OF BECOMING DRY?

Treatment can take a few months to work. If you only take the medicines or use the alarm now and then, it may not work at all.

You have a better chance of success by:

- having your treatment supervised
- being ready to make changes.

When bedwetting does not get better, it is not your fault. In this case, you should see a specialist doctor. There are specialist centres that can help people who have been bedwetting for a long time. Contact the **National Continence Helpline 1800 33 00 66** to find your nearest specialist centre.

SEEK HELP

You are not alone. Poor bladder and bowel control can be cured or better managed with the right treatment. If you do nothing, it might get worse.

Phone expert advisors on the National Continence Helpline for free:

- advice
- resources
- information about local services.

1800 33 00 66* (8am–8pm Monday to Friday AEST)

To arrange for an interpreter through the Translating and Interpreting Service (TIS National), phone 13 14 50 Monday to Friday and ask for the National Continence Helpline. Information in other languages is also available from continence.org.au/other-languages

For more information: continence.org.au, pelvicfloorfirst.org.au, bladderbowel.gov.au

* Calls from mobiles are charged at applicable rates.

