
BEDWETTING

It is reckoned that approximately 15 - 20% of five and six year olds wet the bed. It is also the case that some children older than that have problems.

How it is dealt with can make all the difference to the child. Parents can feel frustrated and annoyed having to cope with frequent wet beds and getting the child cleaned up. At the same time, it can be embarrassing for the child who may feel humiliated by what is happening. Everyone hopes for a 'dry night' and, if that doesn't happen, there is a feeling of disappointment and sometimes anger.

No matter how high feelings are running, they should not be made apparent to the child - otherwise he or she will become more stressed by the situation. No fuss should be made about the issue, and it should be kept as a 'non-topic' in the family.

There are some tips which can help ...

- ❑ Keep drinks to a bare minimum for two hours before bedtime.
- ❑ As well as having the mattress protected, make sure you have clean bedclothes and nightclothes readily available so that the child and/or you can make the change easily and without fuss.
- ❑ Quiet encouragement when there are dry nights may help. Have a simple reward system like smiling faces on a calendar.
- ❑ The emphasis should always be on the positive - with no question of punishment for wet nights.

If there is a persistent problem after the age of six, you should talk to your doctor. However, if you feel concerned or stressed about your child bedwetting before they are six, also talk to your health visitor or doctor.

Q:

Our two children are due to stay with close friends for a weekend at the end of the summer. It is something we are all looking forward to. The problem is that our five year old sometimes wets the bed. It only happens occasionally, but usually when she is excited. I don't know whether to chance it or to tell my friend.

A:

You need to be up-front and talk to your friend - but not, of course, in front of the child! Explain it to them, provide protection for the bed, and offer extra bedclothes. You should also make sure that your child knows what to do if it happens. The more you deal with this in a matter-of-fact way, the more everyone will take it in their stride and concentrate on the important thing of having a good weekend.

