

Daytime wetting in children

Is daytime wetting normal? — Yes, it can be normal. By age 4, most children can control their bladder and stay dry during the day. But children ages 4 to 6 – and even older – can still have "accidents" during the day and wet themselves.

Daytime wetting can be very upsetting and stressful for children, especially when they go to school or daycare.

What causes daytime wetting? — Different things can cause daytime wetting, including:

- The child's behavior or habits – For example, children who are very active might wet themselves because they wait too long to use the toilet.
- Constipation, which is when children have trouble having a bowel movement
- Urinary tract problems or infections ([figure 1](#))
- Nervous system problems

Should my child see the doctor or nurse? — Your child should see the doctor or nurse if he or she:

- Is upset or stressed by the daytime wetting
- Starts having daytime wetting after he or she was able to stay dry all day before
- Has pain when urinating or feels the need to urinate often
- Leaks urine after he or she has finished urinating
- Has many urinary tract infections, constipation, or another condition that could be causing daytime wetting

The doctor or nurse will talk with you about your child's symptoms and do an exam. He or she might also do a urine test. Before the appointment, he or she might ask you to keep a record for a few days of:

- How much your child drinks
- How often your child urinates and has bowel movements
- When the daytime wetting happens

Most of the time, daytime wetting is not caused by a medical problem. In some cases, though, it is. If your doctor finds a medical problem, he or she might treat the problem, order more tests, or have your child see a specialist.

What can I do to try to stop my child's daytime wetting? — You can try different things at home to stop your child's daytime wetting.

- Make a schedule and have your child urinate every 2 to 3 hours during the day. Give your child rewards for following the schedule.
- Have your child follow the doctor's advice about how to sit when urinating.
- Remind your child not to hold in urine and to urinate before he or she feels the urge to.
- Have your child sit for a few minutes after he or she urinates to let all the urine drain from the body.
- Avoid bubble baths or using soap on the genital area (in girls). These can irritate the genital area and worsen daytime wetting.

- Treat your child's constipation, if your child is constipated. Ask your doctor or nurse about ways to do this.

For any of these plans to work, both you and your child must want the daytime wetting to stop. Stopping daytime wetting can be very hard and can take a long time.

Remember that children cannot help their daytime wetting. You should never punish, tease, or get mad at your child for it.

Are there other treatments for daytime wetting? — If your child still has daytime wetting after trying the tips above, talk with the doctor or nurse. He or she might do other tests or suggest other treatments that could help.

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