

The Right Adjustment: Bedwetting and Chiropractic

by April E. Clark

You've probably heard of chiropractors, but you may associate them with adults who have back problems or spinal issues. But recent studies have shown that chiropractic, the fastest-growing and second-largest primary health care profession in the United States, according to the International Chiropractic Association, could help some children manage bedwetting.

In fact, results from a study published in the Journal of Manipulative and Physiological Therapeutics found that one-quarter of the 171 children in the study treated with chiropractic had a 50 percent reduction of wet nights.

Amy*, mother to a 9-year-old son who wet the bed nearly every night of his young life, decided to take her son to a chiropractor after trying a multitude of coping solutions. "We've only had a handful of dry nights in his life," she says. "We've tried various things, including biofeedback at a urologist, which helped a bit. One night out with the girls, someone mentioned going to a chiropractor. After my son's third chiropractic visit, he had a dry night."

Just like Amy, many parents are opting for an alternative, non-invasive and drug-free approach to managing bedwetting.

How It Works

According to Dr. ShaRhae A. Matousek of Matousek Chiropractic in Eden Prairie, Minn., chiropractic can help the nerves that control the organs of the urinary system function better.

Dr. Matousek says, "Since your nerves affect every cell of your body, they influence organs such as the bladder. When a chiropractor restores normal motion in the spine, the nerves are able to function properly. Taking the stress away from the nerves allows the organs to function optimally."

Should Your Child Visit a Chiropractor?

For Amy, frustrated after trying a variety of coping solutions, the choice to pursue alternative therapy comes as no surprise to specialists who practice pediatric and family wellness chiropractic. But seeking bedwetting treatment from a chiropractor can not only come as a last-ditch effort like Amy, but also as a second opinion outside of the family doctor or pediatrician.

In her experience, Karen* of Michigan has found that her chiropractor incorporates a more personal understanding of her son's condition into the practice. "Our 11-year-old son is still wetting enough to soak the GoodNites® [Underpants], usually four or five nights out of seven. Nothing seems to work," she says. "Our doctor doesn't seem to be concerned at all, but our chiropractor, who tried adjustments to alleviate the problem, seems to be very concerned. We feel stuck in between."

Amy says, "My son went to the chiropractor two to three times a week for about two and a half months. After his third visit he had a dry night, and a few other nights sporadically after that ... we were told that one of his nerves from his bladder was being blocked and that adjustments would help. I believe they did."

What to Expect

"The length of time that one would need to see a chiropractor varies on the degree of 'correctness' that his or her spine needs," says Amy. "For my son, the treatments lasted five minutes two to three times a week. This did not totally solve his problem, but I believe it improved his wetting."

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However, after going to the chiropractor for two and a half months, Amy decided to stop the treatments after her son was not totally dry. "We, of course, were very hopeful that the chiropractor would have a permanent fix," she says, though she strongly believes the treatments did help lessen the frequency of the bedwetting.

Although bedwetting can be stressful for kids and parents alike, Amy says that treatments such as pediatric chiropractic can provide hope. "I just want to make others aware of this option to help their children," she says. "My son was usually soaked by morning. He still is usually damp, but nowhere near how it used to be."

** While bedwetting is a perfectly normal part of growing up, we have chosen to change the names of individuals in our articles to protect their privacy. Remember, according to the National Kidney Foundation, as many as five to seven million kids over age 5 in the United States wet the bed.*