

Kids First

Bed Wetting

Don't Fall Victim to Marketing Ploys!



Wet blankets and sheets in the morning, soaked, smelly pyjamas and an uncomfortable child—this is a picture of nocturnal enuresis. Enuresis is bed wetting past the usual time a child is “potty trained.”

It's estimated that one out of five children wet the bed regularly. This means that at least 20 per cent of five-to-eight-year-olds wet their bed when sleeping. This is not okay. Imagine what it does to a child's self esteem. The oldest patient I have seen with this condition was a 21-year-old dental hygienist. Can you possibly imagine the mental anguish and self recrimination this young woman must have gone through?

Herbal Helpers

To strengthen the bladder and soothe anxieties which often cause bed wetting, herbal teas and juices provide effective relief.

For bladder strengthening and improvement, give your child herbal teas of bearberry, wormwood, oak bark or horsetail. Steep one teaspoon of herbs for half an hour in one cup of boiling water. Drink two to three cups daily, the last one in the early afternoon, for two weeks.

When the bed wetting is due to an emotional problem, try some calming teas made with one teaspoon valerian, St John's wort, camomile or yarrow in one cup of boiling water. ■

—*Encyclopedia of Natural Healing*

Over time, various reasons have been proposed as the cause of bed wetting: psychological, habitual and emotional. Many seemingly “neanderthal” methods have been used to treat this affliction: alarm systems placed in the bed; electric shocks; hypnosis; drugs; regular waking of the child; psychotherapy; spanking and other bizarre “treatments.” None of these has had much success.

Why does bed wetting occur? It occurs when there is improper function of the valves (sphincters) which control the flow of urine from the bladder. One of these sphincters is under voluntary control, which means you go when you want to. The other is on “autopilot.” In other words, it is controlled by the autonomic nervous system, the part of your nervous system which controls all internal functions that you have no conscious control over. Your child has no voluntary control over this particular sphincter. The function of these two valves is controlled by the child's nervous system, which keeps both in check.

Don't be Fooled

Beware of ads suggesting that it's fine for children to wet the bed because now there are school-age diapers available. These ads seem to suggest that some children's bladders may not have developed properly and so a diaper is the answer. Nonsense! This is called marketing!

(Have you noticed ads recently mentioning a new “disease?” Medicine and the pharmaceutical industry have developed a new disease called the “overactive bladder.” And, as you may

have guessed, there is a drug to deal with the condition. Isn't it a wonderful service they are providing?)

The same holds true for adult diapers. Instead of dealing with the reason why the bladder is not functioning, it's much more profitable to put adults and school-age children in diapers. Marketing claims that it's socially acceptable to go shopping and “do your business” in public because you are now wearing diapers.

Early in my practice I found, as do most chiropractors who deal with children, that kids who are bed wetters respond very well to chiropractic care. We deal with removing any interference to the normal function of the nervous system. Applying this concept to a child whose nervous system control of his or her bladder is lacking, has positive results.

I generally make this problem a game for most children. We have the kids develop a “secret code”—after all, no child wants everyone in the clinic to know that he wets his bed. Days that the bed is dry are called “D” days and all others are “W” days. It's amazing how quickly the “D” days add up. And the sparkle in a child's eyes makes my day!

If your child is experiencing difficulty I urge you to talk to your family chiropractor as soon as possible. ■

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