

From: Scott Corcoran [scott@afamilyforeverychild.org]
Sent: Thursday, July 18, 2013 4:41 PM
To: scott@afamilyforeverychild.org
Subject: Enuresis



Dear ,

Enuresis (en-yuh-ree-sis) is the medical name of not being able to control your bladder. While there are many plausible causes for enuresis, abuse is one of them. Some victims have never managed to control elimination or their bladders, but other children, who were toilet-trained, become enuretic with the onset of abuse. Enuretic situations often are ones of chronic family dysfunction and chronic sexual abuse. Enuretic behavior may be related to regression, anxiety, and misperceptions about the abuse and how the body functions. This behavior may also be an attempt to make the victim unappealing to protect against future assault.

Treatment for Enuresis

When addressing these health related issues, the therapist can:

- Talk to the parents about the possible causes of the behavior, and help parents understand that the behavior is related to the child's past abuse.
- Identify any unresolved issues related to safety and protection. A child who regresses in their ability to control their urination and bowel movements may benefit from extra attention and nurturing.
- Help the parents establish and implement a toilet training plan that is reflective of the child's age and developmental abilities. Patience is key, and after awhile children will resume age-appropriate toilet habits.
- Work with parents on not shaming or punishing their child for their behavior, as this can cause more problems. Helping your child overcome toilet-related issues requires cooperation with your child, a doctor and therapist.

Other Treatments

- **Be mindful of what your child eats or drinks before they go to bed.** By decreasing the amount of liquids your child has right before bedtime and ensuring they use the bathroom before they get into bed, you may see a decrease in bedwetting. Certain foods and drinks that should be avoided before bedtime include anything with caffeine, chocolate, soda, and other carbonated beverages.
- **Using positive imagery.** Imagining that you wake up dry is another technique that has helped some people overcome their enuresis.
- **Use bedwetting alarms.** You can ask your doctor about bedwetting alarms that go off when a child begins to wet the bed. This prevents your child from wetting themselves and their bed entirely, and gives them the opportunity to get up and use the toilet. It may take several weeks for your child to grow accustomed to the alarm and stop wetting the bed as frequently
- **Medication.** Talk to your child's doctor about getting a prescription to decrease urine buildup overnight or to relax the bladder. This should be used as a last resort, because no medication has been found so far that cures enuresis entirely, and bedwetting problems usually return when the child is taken off the medication.

Additional Information

For more information, please visit the following websites:

Kids Health: http://kidshealth.org/teen/diseases_conditions/urinary/enuresis.html#

Child Welfare Information Gateway:

<https://www.childwelfare.gov/pubs/usermanuals/treatment/treatmentf.cfm>

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