

# Bedwetting and sleeping difficulties

*"I felt myself getting panicky every time I put him to bed. Maybe it was a lack of proper routine, but at the time I felt so tired and had so little patience. I never praised him for going all night without wetting his bed. I just got cross when I had to change the sheets again, which didn't really help at all."*

- Children do not wet or soil deliberately
- It is estimated that 1 in 4 of three year olds and 1 in 6 of five year olds repeatedly wet the bed
- Bedwetting may be a sign of a physical problem, but more often your child will learn bladder control at their own pace
- Each child's sleep pattern is different
- Take time to establish a bedtime routine, including a time for your child to relax and unwind before going to bed
- If your child often wakes in the night try to find out why he or she has woken, for example a bad dream or hunger

## how can I help my child?

### Potty training

Your child is more likely to learn to control their bladder if you are relaxed and calm about it. Remember your child will learn at their own pace and praise rather than punishment will help. Between the ages of three and four years your child is likely to be dry during the day, with the occasional accident. Remember, this is often not an instant change but a gradual process where more and more nights will be dry nights.

### Bedwetting

It is not easy to know why some children take longer to be dry at night than others. However, bedwetting is not due to laziness or lack of will power. Some children, in fact up to one in six seven year olds, bed wet. Although this may be stressful for both you and your child, try not to lose your patience; it is rare for a child to wet or soil deliberately. If, after the age of seven, your child continually wets his bed, the problem may be caused by a number of factors. Talk to your child about it and reassure them that other older children experience this too. Discuss any concerns about your child with your GP, Health Visitor or School Nurse.

### Sleeping difficulties

- There are many different reasons why babies and young children do not sleep through the night.
- Try to establish a sleep routine as early as six weeks if possible.
- Feel confident in yourself to know whether your child is really distressed or just restless.
- If your sleep is frequently disrupted by your child's restlessness, arrange for a trusted relative or friend to care for your baby or child so that you can get some sleep.

### Establishing a routine

Many children and babies experience sleeping difficulties at some time. It is important to try to establish a regular night time sleep routine for your child. Prepare a warm, comfortable environment for them to relax in. Reading to your child at bedtime helps your child to unwind and relax. If your child is scared of the dark, try keeping a night light on. A few favourite toys in the bed will be a comfort if your child wakes up during the night. If you are concerned that your child has serious difficulty getting to sleep, or does not regularly sleep through the night, discuss your concerns with your GP, Health Visitor or School Nurse.

### WARNING SIGNS

*There may be none, but does your child seem to be unhappy?*

*Has something happened in the family or in your child's life that is worrying him or her?*

### ACTION

*Stay calm if your child is wetting or soiling the bed.*

*Try to check whether there is a particular time when your child wets or soils. Make sure your child goes to the toilet immediately before going to bed.*

*If you are worried discuss your concerns with your health professional. Seek support for yourself.*

### WHAT TO SAY

*Give your child the chance to discuss their feelings with you, try to keep calm and relaxed without showing signs of anxiety or strain. Praise your child when they sleep through the night. Do not scold your child if they do not sleep through the night, or if they bed wet. Try to develop an understanding for how they feel and whether they are worried by the wetting.*

### PREVENTION

*Make sure your child is aware that they can share any worries with you.*

*If you want advice about things you can do to try to prevent wetting, discuss your concerns with your health visitor, GP or school nurse.*

### CONTACTS

- Health Visitor, School Nurse, Your local GP
- Local SureStart:  
Chippenham  
01249 463907  
Melksham  
01225 709594  
Services Cotswold Centre  
01225 810537  
The Avenue, Warminster  
01985 213383
- Enuresis Resource & Information Centre (ERIC)  
0117 960 3060  
[www.eric.org.uk](http://www.eric.org.uk)

*Check the Wiltshire ACPC website for the latest phone numbers:  
[www.wiltshire.gov.uk](http://www.wiltshire.gov.uk)*