Daytime Wetting

What is daytime wetting?

If your child is having wetting accidents even though they are toilet trained, this is called daytime wetting.

There are some habits that your child may have that can lead to daytime wetting. These include:

- Waiting until the last minute before going to the bathroom.
- Not going pee often enough (you may find yourself saying: “It seems like they can hold their urine all day”).
- Not emptying their bladder all the way. This is called dysfunctional voiding.

Children may squat down on their heels, cross their legs, or hold between their legs to keep from wetting. Other children may urinate small amounts often. These habits lead to incomplete urination, wetting and bladder infection.

What can I do to help my child?

- Have your child go pee every 2 to 3 hours during the day. This is called “timed voiding.” They should go to the bathroom often and on a regular schedule at home, school, childcare and when out.
- Children ages 3 to 8 need an adult to remind them to go to the bathroom on schedule at school. Letting them go to the bathroom “whenever they need to” does not work for children with dysfunctional voiding.
- Your child should not wait until they feel the urge to pee to go to the bathroom.
- Keep a diary of how often your child goes pee for the next two days. This shows your child’s current habits. It can also be a starting point from which to make improvements.
- It can help to buy a vibrating watch to help remind older children to go to the bathroom every 2 to 3 hours. You can find many styles and colors at pottymd.com or bedwettingstore.com.

We can work with you and your child’s teacher to set up a schedule for school as well as at home. Urinating every 2 to 3 hours needs to become a lifetime habit for your child if they have bladder infections. The goal of the timed voiding schedule is to train your child to urinate often without reminders.

Urinary habits

It is important for your child to relax when urinating. This allows their bladder to empty all the way. This helps to get rid of bacteria that can grow in the urine and lead to urinary tract infections.
Tips to help your child relax when urinating:

- For girls, remove pants or tights completely off of one leg so that your child can spread her knees wide apart.
- For girls, place her bottom securely in the toilet opening, have her lean forward and place her elbows on her knees. This allows her bottom and legs to relax. Provide a stool for her to put her feet on. Use a potty chair with younger children.
- Spread legs wide apart (for girls).
- For boys, have them stand with their feet shoulder-width apart. Their knees should be gently bent, not locked.
- Ask your child to take slow deep breaths.
- Have your child relax their head, arm, body and leg muscles “like a rag doll.” Do not have them “push” to urinate — this tightens the pelvic muscles and they need to relax them.
- Have your child imagine urine flowing like a stream or a gentle garden hose.
- Turn the faucet on so a small stream of water runs in the sink. The sound of running water may help your child urinate.
- Allow plenty of time for urination. The process of relaxing and emptying the bladder can take from 3 to 5 minutes.

Bowel habits

A daily bowel movement is best for your child. Encourage your child to take time to sit on the toilet after breakfast or dinner. Often, children who have a problem with constipation (infrequent, hard bowel movements) also can have urinary tract infections.

Check your child’s diet. Some foods, such as dairy products, white bread and highly processed foods can cause constipation. Encourage your child to drink plenty of water and add foods rich in fiber to their diet by including foods such as these:

- Breads/cereals - Eight-grain bread, corn bread, whole-wheat crackers, shredded wheat, bran muffins, raisin bran
- Vegetables - Baked beans, refried beans, corn, peas, broccoli, yams, green beans, cabbage
- Fruits - Figs, dates, raisins, strawberries, melons, plums, pears, oranges
- Snacks - Popcorn, nuts, seeds (sunflower, pumpkin), peanuts and peanut butter, shredded coconut, granola