

Bedwetting alarms

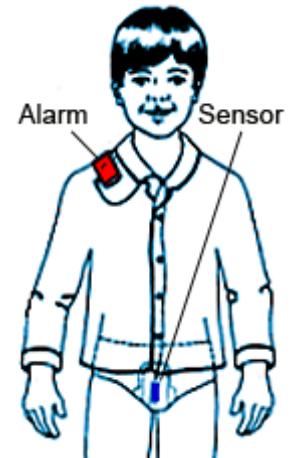
There are two cures for bedwetting: giving it time or bedwetting alarms. When used the right way, alarms work for more than half of kids who use them (60 to 80%).

What does a bedwetting alarm do?

When a child is asleep, the brain and bladder may not work well together. The alarm teaches the brain and body to work together. The alarm wakes the brain up and tells the body to go to the bathroom or to hold urine in the bladder until morning. It often takes a few weeks or months, but many children learn to wake up and go to the bathroom. Other children learn to sleep through the night without wetting.

How does it work?

Most alarms have two parts: a sensor and an alarm. The sensor goes in the underwear. It senses when the first drops of urine come out. An alarm on the shoulder of the pajamas vibrates or sounds. The child then gets out of bed to finish going to the bathroom. With time, children learn when their bladders are full before the wetting starts.



What types of alarms are there?

There are many kinds of alarms and sensors. Some alarms make noise. Others vibrate when a child starts to wet. These may be useful if your child shares a bedroom or has a hearing problem. However, the vibrating type doesn't let parents know when the wetting starts.

Some alarms make noise and vibrate. Some sensors snap into place. Others slide into a pocket in the underpants. Some alarms fasten to the shoulder of pajamas. One type of alarm is a pad the child lies on. The child needs to wet a lot for the alarm to sound. We don't recommend this type as it takes longer for children to learn to stay dry.

How do I know if the alarm is helping?

The first goal is for your child to be able to follow the correct steps when the alarm goes off. Children who wet the bed more than once each night may first see a decrease in the number of times they wet. The size of the wet spot on the bed will get smaller. These are signs that the alarm is working. In time, your child will be dry all night or learn to wake up and go to the bathroom. It may take a few months for this to work, so look for signs of progress and praise your child.

Tips for success

1. Praise your child for using the alarm correctly. Using the alarm is something that, with practice, your child **can** control. Do not punish your child for a wet night.
2. Most children are sound sleepers. If your child sleeps through the alarm at first, you will need to wake them when the alarm goes off. Have them turn the alarm off before going to the bathroom. With time almost all children are able to wake up on their own.
3. If using the alarm fails, it may be due to giving up too soon or not using it the right way. Use the alarm every night, unless your child is away from home or has friends sleeping over. Be willing and able to help. It takes more than a few days, so look for small signs of improvement.

4. There are many brands of alarms. Read the directions for the one you have to make sure you are using it the right way.
5. Have your child practice using the alarm in the daytime. There are few ways to do this. Try a way that works for your child.
 - a. Your child can sit on the toilet and start going to the bathroom. When the alarm goes off, have your child try to stop voiding. Be sure your child empties their bladder before leaving the toilet.
 - b. When your child feels like they need to go to the bathroom, they can go lie on their bed. Have your child think about how a full bladder feels. Then they can make the alarm go off. When it goes off, have your child go to the bathroom and void.
6. Keep a chart of progress. Include how often your child is dry, if your child is able to do the right things when the alarm goes off, and the size of the wet spot in the bed.
7. Make sure your child gets enough sleep so they are not tired in the day. If the alarm goes off more than once a night, you may want to leave it off after the first or second time it goes off.
8. It may be hard to use the alarm during vacation or when your child is staying at someone else's house. If your child skips those nights, use the alarm again as soon as possible.
9. Some children do best if they use the alarm plus a medicine prescribed by their health care provider. Once the child is dry, the medicine can be stopped.
10. When your child has been dry for 14 days in a row, have your child start to wear the alarm less. Try using the alarm every other day, then every third day. If your child starts to wet the bed again, use the alarm every night until your child stays dry for many days in a row again.
11. Your child may get tired of using the alarm. Help your child think of things that will be better, or easier, once they are no longer wetting the bed. Think of ideas to make using the alarm easier for your child.

Your child's health care provider will discuss other things that can be done, along with the alarm, to help your child have dry nights.

For other health and wellness information, check out this resource:

<https://kidshealth.org/ChildrensWi/en/parents>

ALERT: Call your child's doctor, nurse, or clinic if you have any questions or concerns or if your child has special health care needs that were not covered by this information.

This sheet was created to help you care for your child or family member. It does not take the place of medical care. Talk with your healthcare provider for diagnosis, treatment and follow-up.