

Management of Bedwetting

Unlike other children, many children with sickle cell disease (SCD) have difficulty concentrating their urine. As a result of this, during the daytime they will pass urine more often and at night they may have to wake up to pass urine. Waking up when the bladder is full is very difficult even in kids who do not have sickle cell disease. Bedwetting is therefore more common in children with sickle cell disease.

Children who are still wetting the bed beyond the expected age for becoming dry at night, usually by age 6, may benefit from the following measures:

1. **Avoid** the following drinks from about 6pm: milk, tea, chocolate or cocoa, cola sodas, alcohol. These drinks increase the amount of urine we make.
2. The child should **empty the bladder** just before bed-time. **Double voiding** is always useful – that is encouraging your child to try to pass urine again 5 minutes after he/she last voided.
3. The last adult to retire at night should **awaken** the child and see that the bladder is again emptied.
4. If the toilet is far from the child's bed, have a **potty** available at the bedside, especially for younger children. A night light is also useful to help older children find their way to the toilet.
5. Get an **alarm clock** and set it to wake the child in the early hours of the morning to pass urine again.
6. Get a personal calendar for the child and give **reward** points for dry beds. Gradually increase the number of dry nights that are required to obtain the reward. Start with realistic goals – 1 dry bed/week and increase as there is improvement.
7. Use plastic to protect the mattress and get your child to help to change the bed sheets.
8. Quarrelling, embarrassing or humiliating your child will only make the problem worse. Encouraging your child to wake-up and being patient will help them to achieve dry nights.

Praise works!

9. **Bladder exercises** sometimes help. During daytime, the child should hold his/her urine for as long as possible and then empty the bladder. The stream of urine should then be briefly halted during the passage of urine and the process then continued to the point of emptying the bladder completely.

Your child may never be able to sleep though the night without passing urine... they must therefore learn to wake up to pass urine in a potty or the toilet.