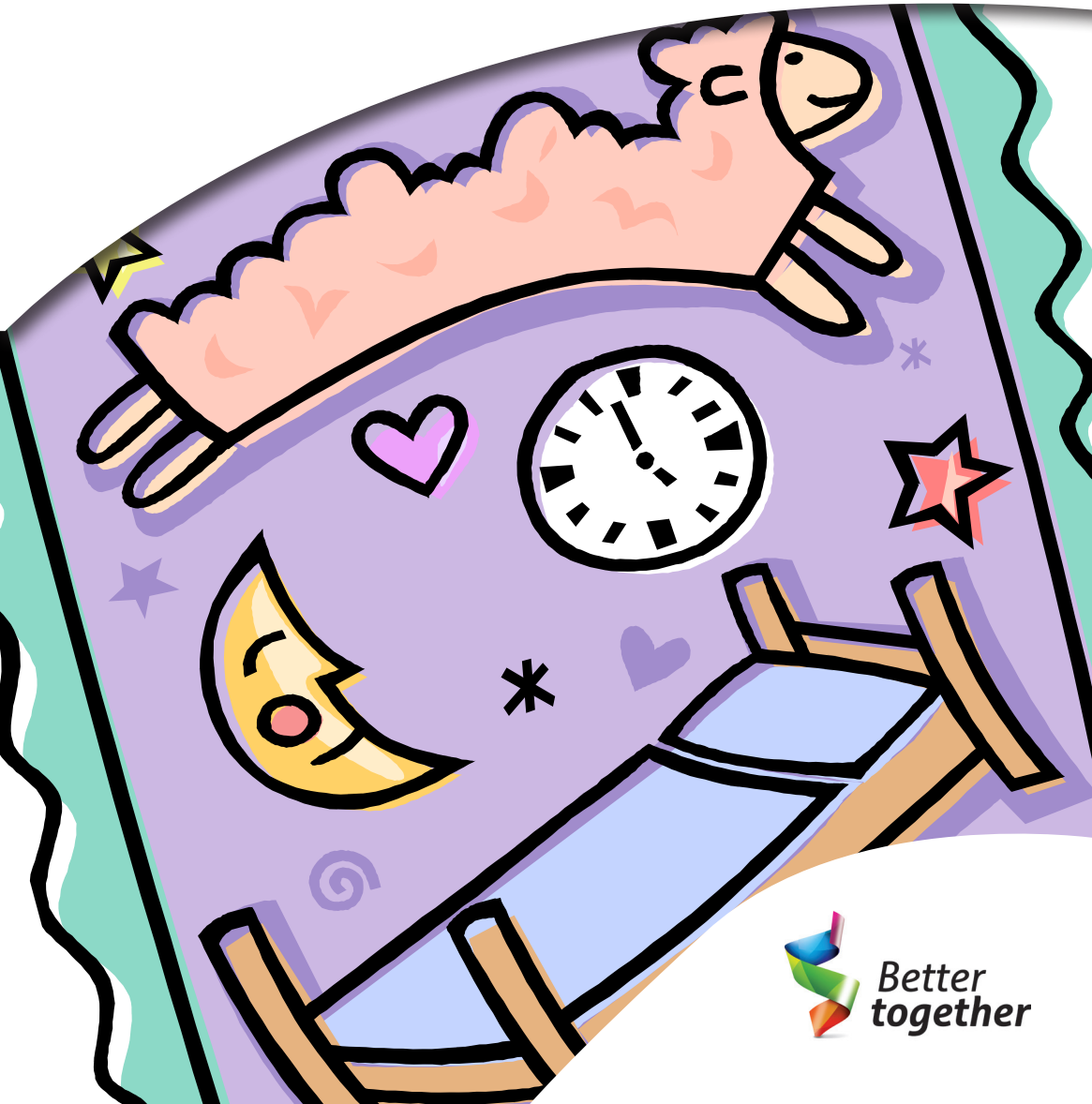


# Is bed wetting a problem?



## Bed wetting affects about half a million children between 5 and 16

- 16% of 5 year olds
  - 9% of 9 year olds
  - 2% of 15 year olds
- Are affected.

If bedwetting affects you or a child over 5 in your family read on as you may have questions about:

- drinks
- night time routines
- rewards



- alarms
- medication
- people who can help.



### The bladder and bedwetting

The bladder is a muscular bag. It stretches like a balloon as it fills with wee from the kidneys. The signal to have a wee goes from bladder to brain via a nerve. If a child does not wake to the signal, the bladder stretches to its limit, then the muscle at the bladder outlet relaxes, the bladder empties and the bed gets wet.

It is not due to laziness or sleeping too deeply and is not the child's fault. It can cause distress for children and their families, but with the right help most children learn to wake to a full bladder signal and develop bladder control.

### Helpful tips - drink plenty

Age	Sex	Total drinks per day
4-8 years	Female	1000 - 1400 ml
	Male	1000 - 1400 ml
9-13 years	Female	1200 - 2100 ml
	Male	1400 - 2300 ml
14-18 years	Female	1400 - 2500 ml
	Male	2100 - 3200 ml

**Have at least the recommended amount of fluid, at regular intervals:** this strengthens the bladder's muscles so it holds more wee. Reducing drinks may reduce bladder capacity and increase the urgency to wee. Ask at school about taking a water bottle.

**Have the last drink of water, milk, or juice about an hour before bedtime:** cutting out this drink rarely improves bedwetting, but avoid coffee, tea, chocolate or fizzy drinks as these make the kidneys produce more wee.

### Have regular wees during the day

**Have regular daytime wees at natural breaks between activities and lessons:** only hold on for a few seconds, this develops better control than holding on for a long time, or doing frequent small wees 'just in case'.

### Make a night time routine

**Empty the bladder when getting ready for bed and again before falling asleep think about being dry:** thinking that being dry is possible can help more than thinking about being wet. Be the boss of your bladder.

**Switch off lights and TV, but make sure the toilet is easily reached:** a torch or bedside lamp may be useful. A potty in the bedroom might be helpful if getting to the bathroom is difficult. Have a dressing gown nearby, if the house is cold at night.

### **If you wake in the night get up for a wee**

But parents/carers avoid lifting. This is when a sleepy child is put on the toilet. If the child is not properly awake it is like wetting in their sleep. It's best to learn to wake independently to a full bladder.

### **Be proud of small goals**

Small rewards for small achievements can help the long-term goal of getting dry. This might be a sticker for having two wees at bedtime. Always avoid punishment for wet beds. However getting the child to help change the bed is important.

**Enuresis alarms** may help some children to learn to wake when their bladder is full.

**Medication** may help some children to concentrate their urine at night.

**Constipation** can be a cause of bedwetting – it is important to ensure your child is having their bowels opened regularly.

More advice about treatment, ways to help your child and coping with bed-wetting is available from:

[www.eric.org.uk](http://www.eric.org.uk)

Tel: 0845 370 8008

(Education and resources for improving childhood continence)