

Tips for Using an Enuresis Alarm



Set realistic expectations.

- It takes 10 to 12 weeks for the average child to be consistently dry. Some may take longer.
- It is rare for a child to hear the alarm and walk to the bathroom alone the first night. This is a learned response and requires parent participation.

How to respond to the alarm.

- Parents should respond to the alarm by going to the child's room and noting his or her response.
- It is essential to reminding the child of the next step - "Put your feet on the floor and walk to the bathroom."
- Turn off the alarm *only* after the child's feet are on the floor.

A few rules of thumb...

- Do not be discouraged if the child has no recollection of the alarm and subsequent bathroom visit in the morning. Learning is still taking place.
- Progress can be measured by recording the frequency of wetting episodes per night, the time of the wetting and the size of the wet spot before the child responds.
- Many children wet more than one time per night initially. Reattach the alarm to clean underwear after each wetting episode. As the child makes progress, the nightly wetting episodes will decrease.

- Initially, the child will have emptied his or her bladder by the time he or she hears the alarm (or the parent responds). Over time, the new response will be one of stopping the urine flow when the alarm sounds.
- Consider giving rewards (stickers, time for favorite activities, etc.) in recognition of cooperation, for wearing the alarm and walking to the bathroom when parents come to get them, as well as for dry nights.

Dry Nights ... What Next?

- Have the child use the alarm until he or she has had 2 weeks of consecutive dry nights, and then use the alarm every other night for 2 more consecutive weeks of dryness. If wetting occurs during this process, start the 2-week weaning process over again.
- "Fluid challenges" – having the child drink an extra glass of fluid before bed – while wearing the alarm can help ascertain whether the child has developed the ability to anticipate the alarm and wake up when he or she needs to urinate. This should be accomplished before the alarm is discontinued.
- Discontinuing the alarm prematurely can lead to a relapse of the wetting.