

## **Back to School Season Means The Return of Sleepovers**

**By Ann Douglas**

It's back-to-school time—a time of year when kids catch up with friends they haven't seen all summer and start planning after-school activities and sleepovers.

It's an exciting time of year, but it can also be a highly stressful time of year for the half-million Canadian children age five and older who struggle with bedwetting.

They want to participate in sleepovers and other overnight activities, just like their friends, but they worry that their bedwetting problem will be discovered. Too often, they decide to play it safe: to pass on fun activities like sleepovers and overnight trips for fear of wetting the bed. The result is social isolation and low self-esteem.

It doesn't have to be this way.

If there was greater understanding of the causes of bedwetting and what can be done to help children with this common medical condition, children wouldn't feel the need to miss out on sleepovers and other overnight activities.

### **The causes of bedwetting**

Bedwetting (nocturnal enuresis) is a common medical condition in children five years of age and older. It tends to run in families. If both parents wet the bed when they were young, there is an 80% chance their child will wet the bed; if only one parent wet the bed, there's a 50% chance; but even if neither parent wet the bed, there's still a 15% chance.

Bedwetting is a biological issue, not a psychological problem. A child who wets the bed can't control the bedwetting simply by trying harder or wanting the bed to stay dry. If that was the case, there would hardly be any wet beds at all. Kids who are dealing with bedwetting want nothing more than to stay dry.

Typically, once children achieve daytime dryness, night-time dryness follows soon after. But for some kids, it takes a little longer. Eventually, their bodies will learn how to slow down urine production at night; their nervous system will wake them up when their bladders are full so they can get up and go to the bathroom instead of wetting the bed. They just aren't quite there yet.

### **What can parents do to help kids in the meantime?**

Schedule a checkup with the family doctor. The doctor will take a complete medical history, conduct a thorough physical examination, and test a urine sample. This will allow the doctor to rule out any other medical issues that could result in bedwetting, such as urinary tract infections, problems with the urinary tract, diabetes, sleep apnea, and constipation.

A treatment for bedwetting will be recommended, based on the type and severity of the child's symptoms. Both medical and non-medical treatments are available. One of the treatments often recommended is DDAVP® Melt, a product which treats the root causes of bedwetting by limiting night-time urine production. The DDAVP® Melt formulation dissolves quickly under the tongue without the need to consume water, eliminating the need for children to drink fluids or to swallow a tablet at bedtime.

### **Have a plan for managing sleepovers**

If your child is planning to attend a sleepover, ensure that your child brings his medication to the sleepover and double-check that he knows how to use it (he simply places the tiny wafer of DDAVP® Melt under his tongue and waits for it to dissolve).

Remind your child of the importance of minimizing fluids before bedtime and of using the bathroom right before he's ready to go to sleep. He should also steer clear of colas and other caffeinated beverages at the party (caffeine is a diuretic—a substance that flushes fluids from your system. It's not a great choice for a child who is struggling with bedwetting).

Have a conversation with the parent who is hosting the sleepover. Let the parent know that your child will be taking his medication before bedtime. And ask the sleepover parent to ensure that your child can reach the bathroom easily in the middle of the night (by leaving a night light on in the hall or in the bathroom, for example).

Finally, encourage your child to relax and enjoy the party. Kids have been relying on DDAVP® to help them avoid the embarrassment of bedwetting accidents at social events for over a generation. He doesn't have to stay home and miss out on the fun.

For more information about bedwetting, please visit [www.savvymom.ca](http://www.savvymom.ca) and [www.medbroadcast.com/bedwetting](http://www.medbroadcast.com/bedwetting).