

## PATIENT INFORMATION: Enuresis

### What is enuresis?

Enuresis is the medical term used for bedwetting. Sickle cell enuresis or “bedwetting” is caused by the kidneys not concentrating (condensing) urine like they should.

This results in:

- Larger amounts of urine
- Going to the bathroom often to empty the bladder
- Bedwetting, even if your child does not drink a lot before bedtime

### What causes sickle cell enuresis?

When abnormal sickle cells get trapped inside the small blood vessels in the kidneys, they block blood flow and keep the kidneys from working like they should.

This can cause:

- Less concentrated urine
- More urine, making it easier to become dehydrated (losing too much water)
- Loss of salt and water balance in the body
- Increased thirst to make up for the water that is being lost in the urine
- Damage to the kidneys, which can get worse over time

Your child's ability to control the extra urine at night depends on:

- Your child's age and sex – it is more common in boys and in younger children
- How deeply your child sleeps
- If bedwetting runs in the family

### What are the symptoms?

Symptoms may include any of these:

- Urinating more often during the day and night
- Wetting the bed at night

If your child has a fever, burning or pain when he or she urinates, call the doctor right away to make sure he or she does not have a urinary tract or bladder infection.

### How can I help my child?

If your child has a problem with bedwetting, talk to your health care provider.

- Your child is not wetting the bed on purpose. Do not punish him or her for it.
- Make sure your child drinks a lot of fluid during the day so that he or she can limit the amount he or she drinks right before bedtime.
- Keep your child well-hydrated to avoid other kinds of sickle cell problems.
- It can be embarrassing for your child. It is important that your child knows it is not his or her fault.

## What is the treatment for bedwetting?

Treatment is the same for other children who do not have sickle cell disease. Some options may include:

- Making sure there are no other treatable problems like an infection
- A bladder specialist (urologist) may check size and strength of bladder
- Most children learn to cope with bedwetting as they get older by learning to get up at night to empty the bladder. This might include:
  - Training to help your child feel when his or her bladder is full and wake up to go to the bathroom
  - Alarm clocks, night lights and bed-wetting alarms
- Making sure your child drinks the fluids he or she needs during the day and not at bedtime
- Avoiding caffeinated beverages as they will cause more urination
- Some insurance companies will cover pull-ups to help limit the amount of bedding changes
- Many children outgrow their enuresis in their early teens
- In some cases, medicines have been used with some success but they do not cure bedwetting

Talk with your health care provider to develop a plan that works for your child.

### Rainbow Sickle Cell Anemia Center

If your child has signs or symptoms of illness, please call 216-844-3345 and follow the prompts.

### Angie Fowler Adolescent & Young Adult Cancer Institute at University Hospitals

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