

## **BEDWETTING ALARMS – YOUR QUESTIONS ANSWERED**

### **Is there more than one kind of alarm?**

Yes. There are two main types - body-worn and bed-mat.

#### **Body-worn alarms**

- There are two types of body-worn alarm – both have a sensor which is placed in the child's underwear – for instance between two pairs of pants. Some have a wire to connect the sensor to the sound box; the sound box itself is small and is clipped to the pyjama top. Others are wireless; the small sound box is placed on the bedside table.

#### **Bed-mat alarms**

- The sensor for a bed-mat alarm is a mat which is placed on the child's bed, under the lower sheet. It is connected by wire to a sound box. The sound box is usually a bit bigger; it is placed on a bedside table.

All the different types of alarm offer a range of sounds; some allow you to record your own sounds or message.

Many offer vibration as an addition or alternative to the sounds; some also emit a flashing glow when sounding.

### **What if my child does not wake up when the alarm sounds?**

It is very common for children to sleep through the alarm to start with. They will need your help to wake up; it is very important to wake them as soon as possible so the association is made with the full bladder and with wetting.

Some parents use a baby monitor to ensure that they hear the alarm promptly. You can purchase a second sound box for some wireless alarms that you can place beside your bed.

### **How can I prepare my child to maximise the chance of success?**

You need to prime your child by practising what to do when the alarm goes off during the night.

So, before they go to bed, they should lie down and pretend to be asleep. Set the alarm off, and ask them to switch it off, get up and go to the toilet.

Practise this three or four times so your child's brain is more ready to respond when the alarm goes off.

### **At what age can my child use an alarm?**

That really depends on the individual child.

They need to be highly self-motivated, as well as mature enough to operate the alarm, albeit with parental help. They must be able to cope with waking up to help with bed changing.

Some five year olds are ready for this; many children though will not be ready until seven or eight years old.

Assessment in a bedwetting clinic will help to decide readiness.

### **What should I expect to happen when we start using the alarm?**

To start with your child is likely to already be quite wet when the alarm sounds and they won't have much wee left to pass into the toilet.

Keep using the alarm **every night**, and after two or three weeks you may see some signs of progress such as smaller wet patches on the bed, wetting happening later in the night, more wee to finish off into the toilet, waking more quickly and easily when the alarm sounds, and/or the alarm not going off as often.

### **How long should we use the alarm for?**

Keep a record of what happens each night using the *Bedwetting Alarm Diary* which is downloadable from the ERIC website.

If there are **NO** signs of progress after 12 weeks the treatment should be stopped, and started again in a few months.

If progress IS being made, and your child feels positive, you can keep going until you have had 14 dry nights in a row - then you can stop using the alarm! Some children do start wetting again. If it's just an occasional wet night, don't worry, these will happen less and less. If it's more than twice a week, use the alarm again.