

Referral Support Service

Paediatrics

PA14

Bowel and Bladder Dysfunction in Children – Guidance Notes

Definition

Bowel and bladder dysfunction (BBD) concerns problems with regular bowel movements and urination in children. Problems with bladder and bowel control are common and affect children of all ages causing embarrassment, anxiety, discomfort and frustration.

Exclude Red Flag Symptoms (*any child with these symptoms needs immediate referral to Paediatrician*)

- Symptoms that commence from birth or in the first few weeks.
- Failure or delay (>first 48 hours at term) in passing meconium.
- Ribbon stools.
- Leg weakness or locomotor delay.
- Abdominal distension with vomiting.
- Abnormal examination findings including: Abnormal appearance of anus.
- Gross abdominal distension.
- Abnormal gluteal muscles, scoliosis, sacral agenesis, etc. Limb deformity including talipes.
- Abnormal reflexes
- Persistent urinary dribbling

In addition please consider the following:

If there is suspicion of **Diabetes mellitus**, an immediate same day referral to paediatrics is required. Also check for polydipsia, weight loss polyuria and urine glucose. If the child has **daytime wetting** with frequency & urgency - check for UTI, constipation, poor toileting routines.

If the child has medical, emotional or physical trigger - consider whether assessment or treatment is needed for any of these identified triggers.

[Consider maltreatment \(NICE Clinical guideline 89\)](#)

Management

Children to refer to Healthy child team (school nurse and HV)

All school age children experiencing:

- mono symptomatic nocturnal enuresis
- day time wetting

Responsible GP: Dr Emma Broughton

Responsible Nurse Specialist: Ruth Mayhew

Responsible Consultant: Dr Luke McLaughlin

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- toilet refusal
- soiling
- those requiring toileting advice and support

All children with primary or secondary enuresis regardless of age.

Prior to referral:

1. Check Urine and treat any infection
2. Screen for constipation and treat if present – see NICE guidelines on treating constipation, <https://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/cg99>

Refer to **Healthy child team for first line assessment and advice**. The Healthy Child Service can be contacted on:

- West Locality 01904 555475
- East Locality 01904 551760
- North Locality 01904 552322

Direct parents to www.eric.org.uk website.

If Healthy Child team assessment and management has not been effective then refer to the Bowel and Bladder service using the dedicated referral form if there is:

- Bedwetting from age 7 and there has been no response to professional advice regarding increasing drinks and toileting for **three months**. (*This age limit is a temporary measure and the aim is to reduce this to be in line with NICE guidelines when service capacity allows*)
- Day-time wetting from school age if advice has been given **for three months from the Healthy Child Team** regarding increasing drinks and regular toileting and their GP has excluded constipation and urinary tract infections
- Constipation and/or soiling when not responding to treatment by their GP for **three months**

Toilet training problems from school age, including children with special needs, after adequate input and supervision from their GP, or healthy child service (HV or school nurse).

Useful Websites

[ERIC – national charity for children with continence problems](#)
[NICE Guidelines – management of bedwetting in children and young people](#)
[NICE Guidelines – constipation in children and young people](#)
[Bladder and Bowel UK](#) (formerly Promocon)