



ELIMINATION DISORDERS

ENURESIS

What it is:

Enuresis is a disorder in which an individual repeatedly empties their bladder during the day or night into their clothes or bed. Most often the emptying of the bladder is involuntary, however it may sometimes be intentional. For a diagnosis of enuresis to be made, the voiding of urine must occur at least two times a week for a period of three consecutive months. The voiding of urine should also cause significant impairment or distress in social, occupational or other areas of function. The individual must also be of an age where continence is expected, so a chronological or mental age of at least 5 years. The voiding of urine should also not be caused by a specific medication or a physical medical condition.

Enuresis is most common in children between 5 and 10 years of age, however older individuals may also develop the disorder. Children with enuresis may experience severe stress as a result of the disorder, especially with regards to social exclusion or ridicule by peers, and anger or punishment from caregivers. The child's self-esteem may also be affected, as they are unable or unwilling to take part in social activities due to the repeated wetting of their bed or clothes.

Common symptoms:

1. Repeated voiding of urine into bed or clothing, which can be intentional or involuntary
2. The voiding of urine can occur during the day or night
3. The voiding of urine occurs at least two times a week for a period of three consecutive months
4. The voiding of urine causes impairment and distress in social, occupational and other important areas of the individual's life
5. The individual is chronologically or developmentally older than 5 years



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Causes:

There are a number of predisposing factors and possible risk factors that have been suggested for enuresis. Environmental factors include delayed or lax toilet training, and psychosocial stress. Enuresis has also been associated with delayed development of normal 24 hour rhythms of urine production, which can result in nocturnal reduced bladder capabilities and bladder hyperactivity. There has also been shown to be hereditary risk factor.

Remember to always consult a mental health or medical practitioner regarding any questions you may have about a mental health diagnosis and treatment options.

This factsheet is based on information obtained from the DSM-5:
American Psychiatric Association, 2013. *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, Fifth Edition.*