

July 30 '77

Cure for bed wetting

by George Meinig, D.D.S.

Dear Dr. Meinig: I have a boy who is almost ten years old and is still wetting the bed. He can't visit friends overnight or go camping. It is a terrible problem for us day after day, but for him it's even worse. He is becoming very timid and shy and no longer makes friends easily. Is there anything in the nutrition that can help? We are desperate. S.S.

Dear S.S.: Of course you are desperate. You and your son have suffered much too long. Yes, there are numbers of things that can be done.

Nutritionally, it would be wise to try a supplement of magnesium. Results from this treatment is often quite prompt, but at times takes a couple of weeks. If he is taking a lot of vitamin B6, this can be causative as B6 increases the need for magnesium.

There are a number of other nutritional connections with the bed wetting problem. Number one of these is caffeine. For children, even small amounts can be very detrimental. Caffeine is a stimulant to the heart muscle and to the central nervous system. Such stimulation increases circulation, which means a higher production of urine by the kidneys. On top of that, caffeine is a potent diuretic. This term literally means "to make water."

I BRING ALL THIS UP about caffeine because many children do drink tea and coffee; but for all those that don't, it's a rare one who isn't consuming more than his share of Coca Cola which is also high in caffeine. Besides these drinks, one should refrain from eating coffee ice cream and other coffee products. More important and little recognized is chocolate. While it contains smaller amounts of caffeine than Coke, the way some eat chocolate makes it a definite factor in bed wetting.

There isn't a consensus of opinion as to when children should develop bladder control. By age 4½, 88% have stopped wetting, at 7½ it's 93%, while of the remaining 7% some may be 17 before stopping. Most physicians feel after age six, effort should be made to correct the dilemma.

If this were my child, I would suggest limiting liquids at dinner to ½ glass of water and no other



George Meinig, D.D.S.

drinks until the next morning. Water itself is also diuretic, particularly when used in large amounts. By all means, don't use punishment in trying to stop the unpleasant predicament. Be sure the child empties his bladder completely not only before bed but at other times. It is surprising how much additional urine is expelled when one tries two or three times.

These various factors when carried out are usually successful in stopping this embarrassing problem. There have been devices marketed to awaken one upon wetting. I am not knowledgeable about them. For more information, I would suggest you consult your physician about the problem, as bed wetting is a fairly common family difficulty. Besides, a thorough medical examination is called for if all these methods have failed, as physical and psychological causes may be present. Best wishes for the springs in your bed to run dry SOON.

Dear Dr. Meinig: What is the junk food diet doing to our children? N.M.

Dear N.M.: The atrocious eating habits of teenagers is a known fact to most, including their parents. It is really a social problem directly related to our way of life. Involved are food processors, advertisers, television, publications, social event planners, governments and literally hundreds of different people and organizations. These all contribute pressures that influence parents in manners that

make abnormal detrimental eating practices acceptable to them and therefore impossible to correct in their children.

Statistics of the U.S. Department of Health, Education and Welfare, show 37.7 to 44.6% of 17 to 24-year-olds to be afflicted with various chronic conditions. The rate at which these problems are increasing has resulted in projections which almost all young people will be so affected by the turn of the century.

In all this gloom there appears a ray of hope. Current interest in nutrition books, lectures and articles is gradually influencing public opinion. Youngsters, too, are showing interest and are asking pertinent questions. It takes a long time to change cultural social habits, but take heart and do exert your personal input. Your children and our world are worthy of the stress and strain of your pioneering foresight.

Everyone has a question about nutrition. Send yours to: Dr. George E. Meinig, c/o OVN, Box 277, Ojai CA 93023.