

# Bladder and Bowel Dysfunction FAQ

## Why am I having accidents, bedwetting, or other pee problems? How Can I make them stop?

Pediatric Urologists see **lots** of kids each day that have pee and poop accidents. These can happen both at home and at school. Kids may not even feel them. The good part is most times it not because of a serious condition. They often do not need invasive treatment.

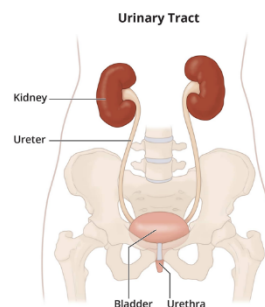
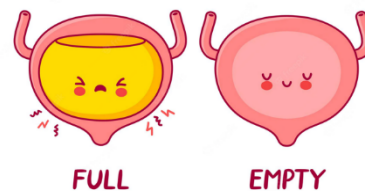
Most of the time, it is a condition called **bladder and bowel dysfunction**. Signs are:

- Daytime urinary (pee) accidents
- Nighttime pee accidents (bedwetting)
- Peeing too often
- Pain with peeing
- Not feeling pee accidents happen
- Feeling the urgent need to pee right now
- Feeling like you cannot get all the pee out
- Frequent urinary tract infections
- Not pooping each day
- Pain with pooping
- Pushing hard to get poop out
- Having large poops
- Having poop accidents

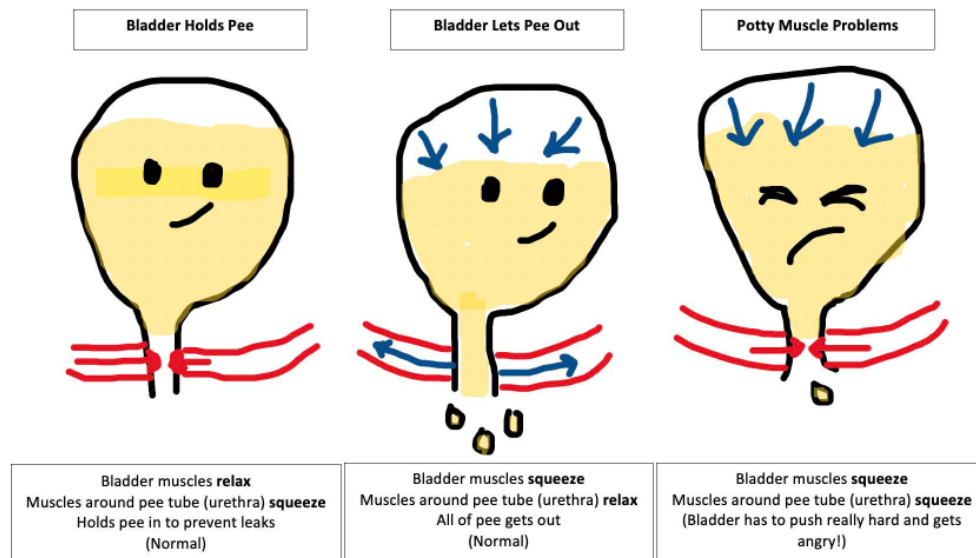
## Why do pee problems happen?

The above signs can happen for a lot of reasons. Some of the causes are:

- **Holding pee too long.** Holding pee until you cannot wait anymore makes your bladder (where the pee sits inside) irritated and angry. It can also make the muscles that hold your pee inside too tight.
- **Overactive bladder.** Some kids have bladders that cannot hold much pee. They may also have bladders that squeeze too often. This makes it so kids cannot make it to the bathroom.
- **Structural problems.** These can be with the urinary tract or nerves that affect the bladder. They are rare but can happen. They are very treatable.



- **Pelvic (potty) muscles are too tight.** There are muscles that hold in pee and poop. These muscles sit around the urethra (tube where pee comes out). The muscles become too tight in some kids who hold pee too long, or even kids who do not hold pee. Then, they do not let all the pee out. This can cause pee to come out very hard or fast. This makes the bladder angry and can cause pee accidents.

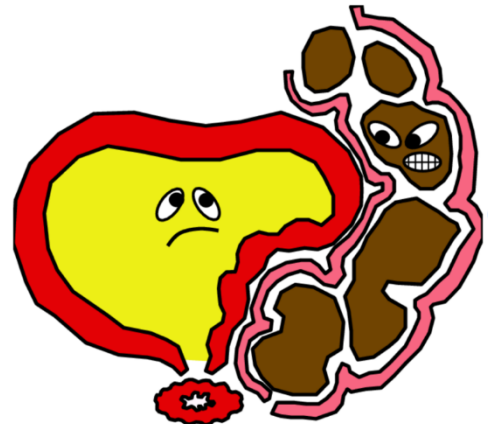


- **Back up of poop. Most kids with troubles peeing also have problems with poop.**

**They may not even know it.** The place where poop sits inside right before it comes out is the rectum. The rectum sits on the inside of the body right next to the bladder. The rectum gets really stretched out if a kid:

- Does not poop each day
- Does not have soft poop
- Does not get all the poop out

This causes pee accidents, pain with peeing, bedwetting, and other pee problems.



- **Link to psychological and behavioral problems.** Stress, mental illness, and ADHD lead to higher risk for peeing and pooping problems. Pee and poop problems can cause:

- Low self-esteem
- Poor school performance
- Shame
- Isolation
- Family conflict

## What is and is not normal?

- Kids should have daytime bladder (pee) control by about age 4. Nighttime bladder control follows months later.
- Kids should pee 5 to 8 times while awake during the day.
- Kids should poop every day.
- Poops should **not** hurt to come out.
- Kids should **not** have to push hard to get poop out.
- Poops should **not** be bigger around than a quarter.

## What happens at a pediatric urology visit?

A doctor, nurse practitioner, or physician assistant will talk with you about your symptoms. Sometimes this can feel weird or awkward. Remember, they talk with kids who have these problems every day. It helps your care team better figure out how to make these problems better.

Your care team will:

- Do an exam
- Might have you pee to do some tests on your urine
- Get an ultrasound of the kidneys and bladder
- Do other tests to make sure there are no structural problems with the urinary tract or spine that might be causing it

**Your care team will talk with you about a plan to get you better.**

## What are treatments for peeing problems?

Most kids get better with a method called the **4-point plan**. Sometimes (but less often) kids need medicines or special physical therapy. If other causes are found, sometimes surgery may be needed.

### 4-Point Plan

**Point 1:** Pee on a schedule. Part of the problem can be waiting until the bladder is really full. Peeing on a schedule, before even feeling it, helps the bladder feel less angry. For most kids this is every 2 hours. Try to go even if you do not feel like it. Your body is always making pee.

Your bladder is like a glass of water. Think of a really full glass, filled to the very top (like glass 1). If you run or play with it, it is going to spill. If you pour out your glass (or empty your bladder) on a schedule, like glass 2 or 3, you will not spill as easy.



**Point 2:** Drinking **a lot** of water or other non-sugary drinks. What is your weight in pounds? Drink 1/2 that many ounces each day. So, if you weigh 100 pounds, drink 50 ounces of water each day. Other drinks are ok in small amounts. Sugary, citrus, and caffeinated drinks can irritate the bladder. They make pee problems worse.

**Point 3:** Use good toilet posture. To relax the pelvic (potty) muscles:








- Place feet flat on the floor or on a stool.
- Keep knees slightly higher than the hips.
- Spread knees apart so the legs look like a big V.

This helps relax potty muscles and empty all the pee. Also, take your time. It is not a race.



**Point 4:** Get the poop out. You should have 1 to 3 soft poops each day. It should be like 3 through 5 on the Bristol stool scale. It should not hurt to get out. You should not push. It should not be really big.

### Bristol Stool Chart

Type 1		Separate hard lumps, like nuts (hard to pass)
Type 2		Sausage-shaped but lumpy
Type 3		Like a sausage but with cracks on its surface
Type 4		Like a sausage or snake, smooth and soft
Type 5		Soft blobs with clear-cut edges (passed easily)
Type 6		Fluffy pieces with ragged edges, a mushy stool
Type 7		Watery, no solid pieces. <b>Entirely Liquid</b>

Drinking more water and eating fiber helps. High fiber foods are whole grains, fruits, and vegetables.

Many kids with peeing problems need stool softeners (like Miralax®). It helps clean out the rectum. Then, the bladder feels better. Do not give up on Miralax® if your child has liquid stools. This is how hard poop gets out.

