

Bedwetting and Soiling in Children

Bedwetting (Enuresis Nocturna)

Enuresis or bedwetting is the loss of urine at night. One speaks of it in children from the age of 5 years if it occurs at least twice a month for at least 3 months. It can occur with or without a previous dry phase. Heredity and psychological stress are contributing factors.

Soiling (Encopresis)

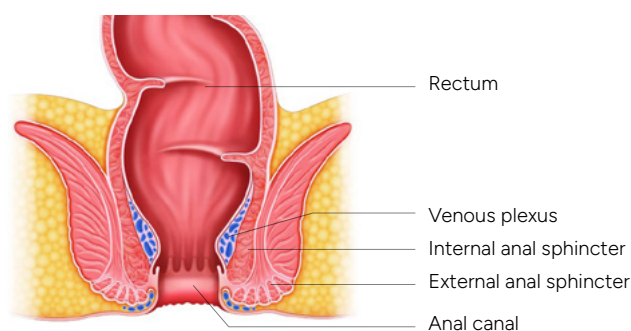
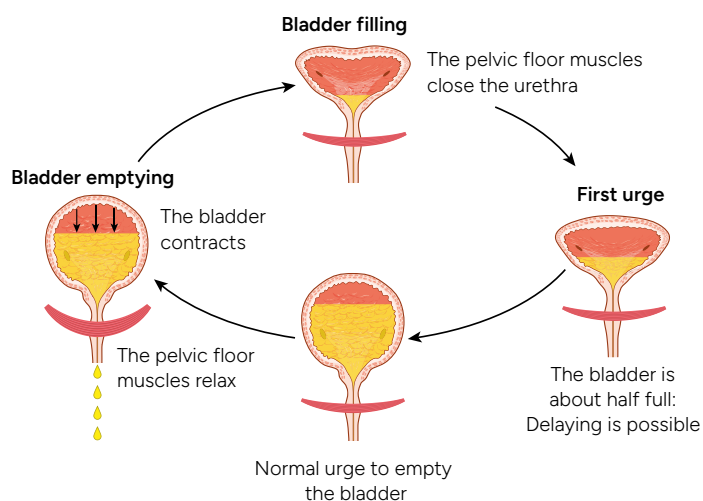
Encopresis is the voluntary or involuntary passing of stool not on the toilet. This is spoken of in children from the age of 4 years if there are no physical reasons for it. Encopresis can occur with or without constipation and can be associated with avoiding the toilet for bowel movements.

Anatomy and Function of the Bladder and Rectum

The bladder is a muscular hollow organ that cannot be tensed voluntarily. Urine continuously produced by the kidneys collects in it like in a rain barrel. An inner and an outer sphincter muscle ensure that no urine escapes.

The external sphincter can be controlled voluntarily; it can actively hold tight or relax when we are on the toilet. We speak of the storage phase, in which the bladder is filled, and the emptying phase, in which the bladder empties. At night, when we sleep, the emptying phase must be automatically suppressed.

The rectum is located above the anus in the small pelvis. Normally, the rectum is empty. At rest, the internal sphincter muscle keeps the anal canal closed. A network of veins helps it by sealing it additionally, like a soft cushion. The external sphincter can be controlled voluntarily; it can actively hold back when there is an urge or relax when we are on the toilet. The filling of the rectum is felt as an urge to defecate.



Pelvic Floor Physiotherapy

Every child with voiding problems (bladder/bowel) should be examined at a pediatric specialty center, where a decision will be made as to whether medication and/or physiotherapeutic treatment should be given. The pelvic floor physiotherapist, who specializes in children, works with body awareness exercises, playfully getting to know the pelvic floor muscles and its functions, toilet training and, if necessary, biofeedback with surface electrodes.

