

Let's Talk About...

Urinary frequency

Urinary frequency means your child needs to urinate (pee) more often than they normally do. It is also called benign urinary frequency. This means there is no infection causing the urinary frequency. Urinary frequency usually affects children 3–5 years old, but it can also affect teens.

What causes urinary frequency?

No one knows what causes urinary frequency. Many children do not have any triggers. However, urinary frequency can sometimes be triggered by changes like:

- Starting school for the first time
- Being bullied
- Moving to a new place
- Losing a friend or family member
- Getting into trouble at school



Your child may also feel urinary urgency when they worry they won't be able to get to the bathroom for a while. This may happen when they're taking a test at school, sitting in a long event, or going on a long car ride.

Urinary frequency can last anywhere from 6 weeks to 6 months.

What are the signs of urinary frequency?

Signs of urinary frequency include:

- Feeling the need to go to the bathroom when you don't physically need to go.
- Using the bathroom as often as every 10–30 minutes and only peeing a small amount.
- Not being able to sleep without waking up to use the bathroom.

How is urinary frequency diagnosed?

Your child's healthcare provider will ask about your child's diet, bowel movements and urinary habits. They may test your child's urine to see if they have a urinary tract infection, which can also cause urinary frequency.

Your child may have urinary frequency if:

- They aren't drinking more fluids than before and continue to feel the urge to pee.
- They don't have pain or burning when peeing.
- They aren't leaking into their underwear or having trouble holding their urine.
- They don't have an infection or fever.
- They pee a lot more during the day than at night.
- Their urine isn't a strange color and doesn't smell bad.

If your child has a normal physical exam and normal urine, their healthcare provider may diagnose them with urinary frequency.

How is urinary frequency treated?

Because urinary frequency is not caused by an infection or other health problem, your child may not need medicine or other treatments. You can help your child by:

- Not making a big deal when your child pees often throughout the day.
- Giving them activities to do when they feel the urge to pee.

- Teaching them they can wait longer to pee without having an accident.
- Making sure they know they are healthy and there is nothing wrong with them.

When should I call my child's healthcare provider?

Call your child's healthcare provider if your child starts to drink a lot of liquids (more than normal), has painful urination, or can't control their urine and frequently has accidents. They may have an infection or another health problem.

Notes

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

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