Pediatric urinary incontinence is diagnosed when children are unable to control their bladder and experience urinary accidents. Parents and providers should become concerned when children over the age of 4 cannot control their bladder during the day, or overnight by the time they have reached the age of 5. While this may be a phase that passes in time, urinary incontinence is often a symptom of another issue, including constipation, anxiety, attention deficit disorders (ADD), a urinary tract infection (UTI), or overactive bladder, to name a few of the many conditions that can cause or aggravate incontinence. If your child experiences urinary incontinence for two months or more, and is older than the described age, it is recommended they visit a pediatric urologist.

Children with a wide array of clinical issues, ranging from mild congenital problems to neurologic and genetic disorders, are also at risk for voiding difficulties. Many of these children experience such issues and are often unable to communicate their problem until it presents as a UTI or other manifestation. Children who have suffered head trauma, strokes, brain tumors, and spinal cord injuries also need initial evaluation and follow-up by a pediatric urologist, in addition to their specialty team.

Yale Pediatric Urology takes care of the simple to the complex, and works with a multidisciplinary team, which includes psychologists, pediatric surgeons, orthopedic surgeons, neurosurgeons, neurologists, and gastroenterologists, to provide the highest level of comprehensive care for your child.

Appointments: (203) 785-2815
Diagnosis
Our team will meet with you and your child to provide a comprehensive review of their medical history, as well as a physical exam to pinpoint the source of the issue. We will commonly perform non-invasive tests, such as a urinalysis, renal ultrasound, and bladder scans to look for retained urine and a uroflowmetry to assess how efficiently your child voids. Rarely is there a need for blood tests or invasive testing such as catheterization or urodynamics to measure bladder pressures.

Treatment Options
Most all causes of urinary incontinence can be effectively treated with one or a combination of treatments.

Therapies
Urotherapy is the first step in helping your child correct their incontinence; this includes timed voiding, dietary changes, and management of constipation, which is commonly present. Such simple interventions are frequently successful in up to 50% of all cases.

Biofeedback Therapy works with the pelvic floor muscles, which support the bladder and bowel and control the flow of urine. This treatment helps children isolate their pelvic floor muscles and teach them to better control and relax the muscles during urination.

Transcutaneous Electrical Nerve Stimulations (TENS) is a non-invasive, painless treatment that utilizes an inexpensive device that uses an electrical signal to stimulate the nerves in the lower back and send a message to the brain to improve bladder control. This can be done in the comfort of your home.

Counseling
In collaboration with the Yale Child Study Center, cognitive and behavioral therapy can help children learn how to modify their behavior and is considered a leading approach to the management of overactive bladder. Counseling is also helpful in teaching children coping skills after experiencing an incident of wetting in a social setting.

Medication
While antibiotics are used in cases of urinary tract infection, our team prefers to treat the underlying cause of the UTI, which in many cases is due to incomplete bladder emptying or bladder overactivity. Overall, medications are used judiciously to minimize side effects and optimize outcomes. In addition, Yale Urology is actively involved in clinical trials to gain access to novel therapies to bring new treatment options to our patients.

Our pediatric team has been pioneers in the use of Botulinum Toxin A (Botox) to treat overactive bladder and muscle/sphincter problems in children, and it is utilized when other medications have failed.

Surgery
Very rarely is surgery considered a tool to help children with urinary incontinence. However, in some cases, anatomic causes must be corrected to stop the incontinence.

Although a common issue, if your child is experiencing daytime or nighttime urinary incontinence, lower urinary tract symptoms or urinary tract infections, they should not be ignored and help is available. Please call Yale Urology for an appointment to meet with a member of our pediatric urology team.

Appointments: (203) 785-2815

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