



Pediatric Surgical Associates, Ltd.

Patient and Family Education

## Dysfunctional Voiding

### What is dysfunctional voiding?

Dysfunctional voiding is a term for an abnormal pattern of urination. The symptoms vary and commonly the main symptom is day and night wetting. Usually children can hold their urine for 2-3 hours without wetting. Children with dysfunctional voiding may have a strong urge to urinate more frequently. An under developed neurologic system causes the bladder to contract, or spasm by itself. As the neurological system develops, and the bladder coordinates with the brain, the spasms will stop. Children who have these spasms may squat down on their heels, cross their legs or hold themselves between their legs to keep from wetting. These learned behaviors become a habit when they feel any urge. This may also lead to ignoring the urge to have a bowel movement and they become constipated.

### Dysfunctional voiding with constipation

Children with dysfunctional voiding may also have constipation. When a child is constipated, the rectum may be full of hard stool and can actually irritate the bladder and keep it from holding as much as it should. The constipation can make the wetting problem worse. Ask for the information sheet called “Preventing Constipation” for more information.

### How is dysfunctional voiding treated?

Depending on the age and severity, the treatment involves three things: Medicine, a regular bowel program, and a timed voiding

schedule. These must be used together in order for this condition to be treated successfully. Changing your child’s habits can take a long time. At school, children may need to be reminded to go to the bathroom. We can work with you and your child’s teacher to set up a schedule.

#### • *Medicine*

Your doctor will probably order a medicine that allows the bladder to rest and help decrease the bladder spasms. Your doctor will tell you how much to give. Possible side effects will be discussed with you and your child.

#### • *Bowel program*

It is very important for your child to have a bowel movement every 1-2 days to avoid constipation. Ask for the information sheet called “Constipation” for more help.

#### • *Timed voiding schedule*

Your child should urinate during the daytime every 2-3 hours (some children may need to go more often). This schedule will help train your child to empty the bladder before it gets full and begins to leak.

#### *How to urinate correctly*

It is very important for your child to relax when urinating. Relaxing helps the bladder to empty completely. It is important to empty the bladder because this helps get rid of bacteria that can grow in the urine and lead to infection. Encourage your child to relax and spend enough time to get all the urine out.



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**Here are some ways to relax when urinating:**

- Girls should remove pants or tights completely off of one leg so that they can spread their legs far apart.
- Girls should sit way to the back of the toilet and lean forward.
- Breathe deeply.
- Relax the muscles of the head, arms, body and legs “like a rag doll”.
- Imagine urine flowing (turn water on in sink).
- Allow plenty of time for urination. The process of relaxing to empty the bladder takes time. Plan to spend 3-5 minutes in the bathroom.

**Questions?**

If you have questions or concerns, please call your child’s doctor at Pediatric Surgical Associates at (612) 813-8000 or 1-800-992-6983.