

7

steps to staying dry at night

Weaning your toddler off nappies in bed can seem like an uphill struggle. But with our helpful pointers, and a whole heap of patience, we promise you'll get there

Getting your little one out of nappies at night can seem like a never-ending saga – from dragging yourself out of bed at stupid o'clock to change soaked sheets, to constantly having to put the washing machine on, it's enough to push the sanest mum over the edge. But whether this is your first or tenth attempt, follow our seven steps to help minimise those midnight mishaps.

1 Nappies aren't the enemy...

While you should wait until your little one is dry in the day, it can take months or even years for some children to master night-time dryness, so don't take away bedtime nappies until you feel he's ready.

"If you find your toddler's nappy is soaked most mornings, wait until his nappies are drier before you start," says Kate Daymond, health visitor and sleep consultant (www.katedaymond.co.uk). "Some children can be

school age before they're dry at night so don't worry if your toddler is still trying to master it," says Kate. "And often boys are slower than girls."

2... but be brave

Although you don't want to whip the nappies away too quickly, you don't want your toddler to get used to always relying on one. There's only one way to see how he'll cope through the night without a nappy and that's to take it off.

"It can be tempting to leave the nappy on for longer than needed because it's easier, and part of your routine," says Kate. "Be brave and try taking it off – but only if he's dry for at least five mornings a week."

3 Don't let the wee get to you

"Never tell your toddler off for bed wetting," says Kate. "And don't go to the extreme and make a big fuss at night as this will teach him that it's a good way to get attention." If he can manage it put a potty by his bed with a towel underneath so he can get up quickly in the night if he needs to. It's also a good idea to keep a nightlight on.

4 Pace yourself

"If you have three dry nights in a row things are working, but if there's no progression, there's no hurry," says Kate. And sometimes toddlers stay dry for a

while and then regress. "But before putting him back in nappies, check there haven't been any big changes in his life, like starting nursery, moving house, or a new baby. If there have be patient until things settle down as you probably won't need to start again."

5 Go before bedtime

Don't forget to make the toilet the last stop before bed so your toddler's bladder will be empty before he goes to sleep.

"It's also a good idea to stop giving squashes or fizzy drinks after 5pm. Instead only give him water," says Kate.

6 Use protection

"It's a good idea to use a mattress protector as it'll make your life easier during those late night changes," says Kate. Also make sure you have clean bedding, towels and clothes close to hand and leave the landing light on too, so you can see what you're doing with minimal fuss.

7 Stick with it

Be patient – dry nights involve lots of trying and heaps of encouragement for your little one. And don't let mummy pals put you under pressure to get your tot dry at night too early, as every child is different.

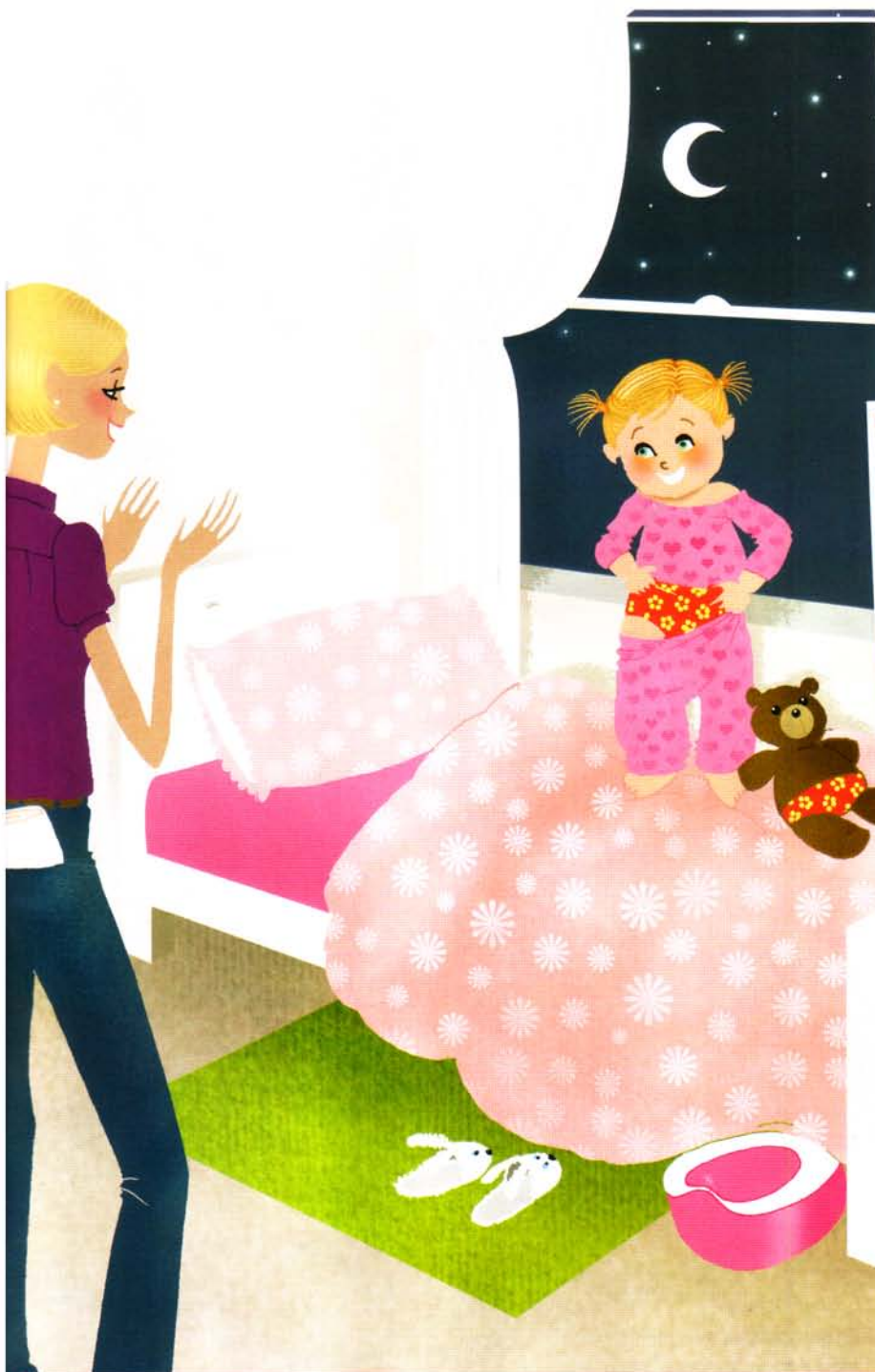
"It can take several weeks before you marvel over dry nappies in the morning, but it will happen," reassures Mary Hayes, 27, from London, mum to Tom, 3. **PP**

FACT OR FICTION?

"My toddler wets the bed because he's lazy"

FICTION

No, it's normally because your toddler's bladder hasn't fully matured and so he isn't able to hold the wee until he's awake.



Take 3 Dry night essentials



COMFY PROTECTION

For a funky mattress protector get a **Brolly Sheet**, £24.95 (0800 917 5204, www.brollysheets.co.uk). It has a cotton top layer, an absorbent middle layer and a non-PVC waterproof back.

ON THE GO

Pampers Bed Mats, £4.15 for seven, from supermarkets and pharmacies, go under your toddler's sheets and are great for travelling with as they're light and disposable.



IF HE'S NOT READY YET

Try him in these **Huggies DryNites Pyjama Pants**, 4-7yrs, £5.29, from all major supermarkets and Boots. Worn like underwear, they have a thin absorbent pad to prevent leaks, so aren't as bulky as normal nappies.



"My dry nights diary"

Sian Venturotti, 32, from Kent, mum to Marcel, 3, and Emmanuelle, 8 months, has been trying to get Marcel dry at night for 3 months. She shared five days of one wetness week with us...

DAY ONE

As Marcel's dry in the day I decide to take his nappies off tonight, we've spoken about it and he seems happy. He says, "Mummy, I don't want to wear my nappies anymore," so we put on his favourite daytime big boy pants. Before bed, I take him to the toilet.

DAY TWO

Marcel wakes up and the sheets are soaked. I don't say too much as I don't want him to feel like he's being told off,

despite the extra washing! At bedtime we follow the same routine – despite last night's accident Marcel still gets excited about putting his big boy pants on.

DAY THREE

More soaked sheets! Tonight I put towels under his sheets with a mattress protector, but I'm wondering if he's ready.

DAY FOUR

The sheets are soaked again! Although this time the mattress is protected and

most of it is soaked up by the towels. I make tonight the last try before putting him back in nappies as I don't want to push him if he's not ready.

DAY FIVE

Marcel gets up early and heads straight for the toilet. He announces loudly to the whole neighbourhood, "Mummy, I'm going for a wee." A small breakthrough!



Click it!

Get tips and advice on potty training from other mums at www.practicalparenting.co.uk