

Chronic Constipation with Soiling the Underwear (Encopresis)

A child aged 13 years' way past his toilet training, but he still has a habit of soiling his underwear. Since last 7 years. The child comes from very affluent family and as a result there was lots of anxiety and embarrassment for the child and his parents.

His, parents, grandparents, teachers and friends alike are quiet baffled by this problem, they tried already conventional treatment, ayurveda and homoeopathy but no relief. It all started when the child entered the nursery school till then the child was properly toilet trained.

The father is an eminent builder in Bombay and mother is an elite socialite, he had one sister 16 years old who is very healthy, father suffers from migraine and recurrent renal stones, mother is pretty healthy, grandparents suffer from arthritis and diabetes.

The child was born premature hence upbringing was quite protected and pampered, this resulted later in to temper tantrums, defiant behaviour, emotional outburst, stubbornness, crying, screaming, anger ranting etc.

In my clinic itself in first visit the child refused to give away mobile phone from his hand to mother and there was a huge fracas.

This was the family background-father very ambitious, angry, egoistic, always short of time, very rich always travelling very little family life. Mother busy with her social activity, it was rumoured that the parents had a big relationship issues over husbands extra marital affair but everything was hush hush... They hardly spend time with kids, as a result the total responsibility of kids was on servants and grandparents.

One thing characteristic in this whole case was extreme clinging of the child even at this age with the mother, the movement the child sees the mother the clinging starts and then he does not allow his mother to move anywhere.

When he entered the nursery he was not very happy and wanted to be at home, even today he does not enjoy school but he loves to study at home. He is very good at study and is well appreciated by his teachers, he is much ahead of his peers to an extent of being rated as a precocious child.

As an infant the child was very constipated till 5 years, can't go to pass stools in night, will control the urge (this is true even today) darkness aggravate all his rectal problem, there was once an episode of having diarrhoea in darkness when the lights of the house went away for half an hour!!!!

His stools vary in consistency but mostly they are very hard and he passes stool every 3-4 days.

In his food habits he loved wafers (potato chips), sour taste, lemons and a strong aversion to milk.

Mentally he is very restless and can't focus on one subject for long time, he is anxious by nature, fearful of strangers and spiders.

Physically he sweats in the sleep, and needs air conditioned most of the time.

I interpreted the family situation and interpreted as disappointment in love.

I took the following rubrics:

MIND - AILMENTS FROM - love; disappointed

MIND - ANXIETY - children - in

MIND - CLINGING - children; in

MIND - DEFIANT

MIND - FEAR - spiders, of

MIND - FEAR - strangers, of

MIND - INTELLIGENT

MIND - PRECOCITY of children

MIND - TEMPER TANTRUMS

RECTUM - DIARRHEA - darkness agg.

RECTUM - INVOLUNTARY stool

STOOL - HARD

PERSPIRATION - SLEEP - during - agg.

GENERALS - FOOD and DRINKS - milk - aversion

GENERALS - FOOD and DRINKS - sour food, acids - desire

GENERALS - FOOD and DRINKS - wafers - desire

GENERALS - LEAN people

Based on above symptoms I gave stramonium 30c, 5 cup method 1 teaspoon full daily for 3 weeks.

Followed by placebo, result was astonishing within 6 weeks' child only had three episodes of soiling the pants. Even the stool that was passed was not hard.

Stramonium was repeated for 3 more weeks followed by placebo in subsequent months soiling of the pants happened once in 15 days. Stramonium 1M 3 doses a week 5 cup method for 2 weeks Stopped encopresis totally.

Encopresis is a symptom of a complex relationship between the body and environmental stresses. Boys with encopresis outnumber girls by a ratio of six to one, although the reasons for this greater prevalence among males is not known. The condition is not related to social class, family size, the child's position in the family or the age of the parents.

Adults sometimes assume that the child is soiling himself on purpose. While this may not be the case, children can play an active role in managing the processes involved in this disorder as you will clearly see in this case.

Possible causes in the above case was unhappiness within family between mother and father that even continued during pregnancy thereby leading to colonic inertia, it is a tendency toward constipation because their intestinal tracts lack full mobility. I have seen many cases where unloved mother, angry mother gives birth to children with colonic inertia thereby produces severe constipation. Some children develop constipation and encopresis because of unsuccessful toilet training as toddlers. They may have fought the toilet training process, been pushed too fast, or were punished for having accidents. Struggling with their parents for control, they may have voluntarily withheld their stools, straining to hold them as long as they could. Some children may actually have had a fear of the toilet, even thinking that they themselves might be flushed away. (Typical Stramonium and Opium state)

Very rarely I have seen children may have painful bowel movement due to an infection or a tear near their rectum. Emotional causes like anger, depression, forsaken feeling can lead to limited access to a toilet or shyness over its use (at school, for example), or stressful life events (marital discord between parents, moves to a new neighbourhood, family physical or mental illnesses or new siblings). While most children with encopresis are also constipated, some are not. These children may refuse to use the toilet and simply have normal bowel movements in their underwear or other inappropriate places. In general, these children are demonstrating their attempts to control some difficult aspects of their lives.