

Lack of bathroom breaks hurts children

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Urinary tract and bladder issues may be forming in children due to irregular urination habits caused by not being allowed to use the toilet at school.

"No, you may not use the bathroom," is a phrase more and more children are hearing from their teachers, USA Today reported Monday. That's especially true in schools where students have used "bathroom breaks" to disrupt classes, cheat on tests or just generally cause problems.

Christopher Cooper, director of pediatric urology at the University of Iowa Children's Hospital in Iowa City, said he has seen many elementary-age "normal children who have developed bad habits." He said children arrive at his office with urinary tract infections, incontinence and damaged kidneys, usually caused by infrequent trips to the bathroom.

Cooper said people of all ages should use the bathroom every two or three hours, but he added that children in school settings don't always have that choice.

"So many parents would tell us, 'We can't do that. The teachers won't let them go to the bathroom'" as often as they need to, Cooper said.

Teachers should let children go whenever they say they need to, he added.

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