



Febrile Seizure

Febrile seizures (convulsions) are seizures triggered by high fever. They are the most common type of seizure. They usually are harmless. The child is usually between 6 months and 4 years of age. Most first seizures occur by 2 years of age. The average temperature at which they occur is 40°C (104°F). The fever can be caused by a common illness such as gastroenteritis (stomach flu), respiratory infections (colds), otitis media (ear infections), and tonsillitis. Seizures may last 1 to 10 minutes without any treatment.

Out of every 100 children less than 6 years old, about 4 will have a febrile seizure. Most children have just one febrile seizure in a lifetime. Other children have one to three recurrences over the next few years. Febrile seizures usually stop occurring by 5 or 6 years old. Short seizures do not cause any brain damage; however, a few children may later have seizures without a fever.

DURING A SEIZURE:

- Stay as calm as possible.
- Place child on a flat surface such as the floor or a bed on their side – in case they vomit.
- Remove any toys or furniture that is in the way.
- Remove any tight clothing, especially around the neck.
- Do not force anything into the child's mouth. This is unnecessary, dangerous and may cause vomiting. The child will not choke on their tongue when they are lying on their side.
- Do not try to stop the child's movements during the seizure.

Call 911 immediately if the seizure lasts longer than 5 minutes. Your child needs to be seen by your healthcare provider for a seizure lasting less than 5 minutes.

- Make note of how long the seizure lasted (You will need to look at a clock – a seizure seems to last forever).
- How your child was behaving during the seizure – twitching of face, arms, legs, both sides.

REDUCE THE FEVER

Bringing your child's fever down quickly may shorten the seizure. Remove your child's clothing and apply cool washcloths to the head and neck. Sponge the rest of the body with cool water. This will help the temperature fall.

AFTER THE SEIZURE

Sometimes children are confused or drowsy after a seizure and need to sleep for a while. Your child may also be cranky or upset. Be sure to wait until your child is awake before giving food, drinks, or medications.

HOME CARE INSTRUCTIONS

Oral-Fever Reducing Medications – Tylenol[®], Tempra, Motrin.

This general advice cannot cover all possible problems. If there is concern, please contact your physician, healthcare provider or the Emergency Department without delay.



Febrile Seizure

- Check the temperature with a thermometer. Febrile convulsions usually occur during the first day of an illness. Use medication as directed at the first indication of a fever (an oral temperature over 38°C or 100.4°F) and give it continuously as directed on the bottle for the first 48 hours of the illness.
- Medicines that contain acetylsalicylic acid (ASA, Aspirin[®]) should not be used to treat fevers in children and teens unless advised by your healthcare provider.
- Read the label on the bottle carefully to find out how much to give and how often. Check with your healthcare provider or pharmacy if unsure.
- If your child has a fever at bedtime, awaken them once during the night to give fever-reducing medication.
- If your child is asleep and has a fever (over 39°C or 102°F), wake them when it is time for more medicine.
- Fever is common after diphtheria-tetanus-pertussis (DTP) immunizations, give your child over-the-counter or prescription medicines for pain, discomfort, or fever as directed by their healthcare provider.
- Fever Reducing Suppositories – Have some acetaminophen suppositories on hand in case your child ever has another febrile seizure (same dosage as oral medication). These may be kept in the refrigerator at the pharmacy, so you may have to ask for them.
- Dress lightly in cotton clothing.
- Remove all heavy blankets. Avoid covering your child with more than one blanket. Bundling during sleep can push the temperature up 1 or 2 extra degrees.
- Keep your child well hydrated with plenty of fluids.

SEEK IMMEDIATE MEDICAL CARE IF:

- Your child's neck becomes stiff.
- Your child becomes confused or delirious.
- Your child becomes difficult to awaken.
- Your child has more than one seizure.
- Your child develops leg or arm weakness.
- Your child becomes more ill or develops problems you are concerned about since leaving your healthcare provider.
- You are unable to control fever with medications and your child is not drinking well.

This general advice cannot cover all possible problems. If there is concern, please contact your physician, healthcare provider or the Emergency Department without delay.