

Febrile seizures

What are febrile seizures?

- Febrile seizures are seizures (convulsions) that occur when your child is sick with a fever. The fever is usually caused by an infection in your child's body.
- Febrile seizures are most common in children between the ages of 6 months and 6 years.
- Although febrile seizures are very scary, they are usually not harmful. Children usually do not have serious or lasting effects from a febrile seizure. A febrile seizure does not mean your child has epilepsy.

What does a febrile seizure look like?

During the seizure, you may notice:

- shaking, jerking or twitching movements of your child's arms and legs
- your child's eyes may stare or roll backwards
- your child's body becomes stiff
- your child is not alert or becomes unconscious

Your child may be groggy for about an hour after the seizure.

How long does a seizure last?

A febrile seizure usually lasts just a few minutes. A febrile seizure usually stops on its own, without any treatment.

How do I care for my child after a febrile seizure?

- You may give your child medication to make him or her more comfortable. Do not give your child aspirin. You may give acetaminophen (Tylenol[®] or Tempra[®]) or ibuprofen (Advil[®] or Motrin[®]). The dose will depend on your child's weight. Follow the directions on the package carefully.
- You should not bathe your child to reduce the fever. Dress your child with light clothing and covers. Do not add extra layers of clothes or blankets.
- When your child is fully awake, give him or her something to drink. Your child needs plenty of fluids when he or she has a fever.

Will my child have another febrile seizure?

It is possible that your child could have another seizure if he or she gets sick with fever again. Most children outgrow febrile seizures by 6 years of age.

What should I do if my child has another febrile seizure?

If your child has another seizure:

- The seizure may be frightening, but try to stay calm.
- If it is possible, try to time how long the seizure lasts.
- Lay your child on his or her side on a soft surface, away from anything hard. Make sure your child cannot fall.
- Stay with your child and comfort him or her. Most seizures will stop on their own in a few minutes. There is nothing you can do to make the seizure any shorter.
- Do not put anything in your child's mouth.
- Do not try to stop the seizure movements.

If the seizure stops on its own within 5 minutes, take your child's temperature and call the family doctor or pediatrician. The doctor may want to see your child to find the cause of the fever.

When should I call the doctor?

Call your family doctor or pediatrician if:

- your child has another febrile seizure
- your child's fever lasts for more than 3 days
- your child looks or acts very sick (very tired or weak, not drinking fluids or difficult to wake)
- your child has not had a wet diaper (passed urine) in 12 hours
- you are concerned about your child

Call 911:

- If your child is blue or not breathing, or
- The seizure lasts longer than 5 minutes

If you are not able to reach the doctor, bring your child to the Emergency Department at the hospital.

Date: _____ Patient's name: _____

Special instructions: _____
