

My child has had one febrile seizure. Will they have another one?

One third of children who have had a febrile seizure will have another one in their childhood. It is unlikely to happen again during the same illness.

There is no medicine to prevent febrile seizures from happening.

You may want to give your child Paracetamol or Ibuprofen when they have a fever. There is no proof that these medicines will stop a seizure but it can keep your child more comfortable.

Does this mean my child has epilepsy?

No. Febrile seizures only occur during febrile illnesses whereas epilepsy causes seizures even without a high temperature.

The majority of children who have febrile convulsions do not go on to develop epilepsy.

Further resources

NHS Choices Febrile Seizures

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/febrile-seizures/>

Useful numbers

Practice Plus

(Brighton walk-in centre / GP service)

0300 130 3333

Open every day from 8am to 8pm, including bank holidays.

www.practiceplusbrightonstation.nhs.uk/

For out of hours GP service or advice ring

NHS 111

Royal Alexandra Children's Hospital

Children's Emergency Department

01273 696955 Ext. 62593

Please be aware that CED staff will not be able to give you medical advice for your child over the phone but can direct you to an appropriate service to assist with your enquiry

Produced by the Children's Emergency Department and Epilepsy Team
Authors: ML / NS / FH

This leaflet is intended for patients receiving care in Brighton & Hove or Haywards Heath

Reference no. 1019.1
Publish Date: June 2022 Review Date: June 2025

© University Hospitals Sussex NHS Foundation Trust Disclaimer:
The information in this leaflet is for guidance purposes only and is in no way intended to replace professional clinical advice by a qualified practitioner.



the
alex

Febrile seizures



What is a febrile seizure?

Febrile means having a fever and *seizure* is another word used to describe a fit or convulsion. A febrile seizure is when your child has a fit during an episode of fever. Most children who have a febrile seizure will come to no harm.

What causes febrile seizures?

In some children, a fever can trigger a seizure. The fever is usually caused by common infections like a cold, flu, or tonsillitis. However, your child may need to be seen by a health care professional to exclude any serious illnesses.

How common are febrile seizures?

They are quite common. They occur in 1 in every 25 children between the ages of 6 months and 6 years.

You may even find that there is a close family member who suffered with febrile seizures as a child too.

What do febrile seizures look like?

You may notice that:

- Your child is unresponsive
- Your child goes stiff
- They jerk or twitch their arms or legs
- Their eyes roll back in their head.

After the seizure your child may want to sleep for an hour or so. They will not remember the seizure.

What shall I do if my child has a febrile seizure?

Febrile seizures can be extremely frightening to witness. The most important thing to do is to stay with your child and put them in the recovery position.

A video on how to do this can be found on the NHS Choices website here: www.nhs.uk/Video/Pages/recovery-position.aspx

If the seizure stops itself in less than 5 minutes, speak with 111 or visit your GP to make sure that there are no concerns about a more serious infection.

Call 999 if:

- The seizure lasts 5 minutes or more
- your child stops breathing or has difficulty breathing at any time.

Try not to:

- Panic!
- Move your child unless they are in danger
- Restrict your child's movements
- Put anything in your child's mouth
- Give your child anything by mouth until they are fully recovered.

Do:

- Note the time - how long did it last?
- Move objects that may cause injury to your child
- Put something soft under your child's head
- Video the episode
- Turn your child on their side as soon as possible
- Stay with your child.