

Care After The Seizure

- occasionally children who have long convulsions need to be watched in the hospital for a while afterwards. This is usually to work out the cause of the fever and watch the course of your child's illness
- sometimes children are confused or drowsy after a seizure and need to sleep for awhile
- your child may be a little cranky for a day or so, but this will pass
- resume your usual routines

Follow Up

- most children who have febrile seizures do not have any long-term health problems. They are normally healthy and grow out of them by the age of 4.
- If your child has repeated long seizure, it may be of benefit to visit a general pediatrician. Discuss this with your family doctor or Emergency Department.

Key Points To Remember

- 1 in 25 children have febrile seizures at one time or another, usually between the ages of 6 month and 4 years
- nothing can be done to prevent the seizure from occurring, remain calm – don't panic

- putting a child in a bath (to lower their temperature) during a seizure is dangerous
- febrile seizure will not cause brain damage. Even very long seizures lasting an hour or more almost never cause harm.
- if the convulsions last more than 3 minutes call an ambulance, otherwise see your family doctor as soon as possible or take your child to the Emergency Department
- if you have worries for any other reason, please see your family doctor

Other Sources Of Information

- your family physician/pediatrician
- BC Nurse Line 24 hours a day, 7 days a week
811
Hearing Impaired: 711
www.healthlinkbc.ca

Developed in consultation with BC Children's Hospital, Royal Children's Hospital of Melbourne, Aus., and BC Nurse Line.

For more copies, go online at <http://vch.eduhealth.ca> or email phem@vch.ca and quote Catalogue No. **GK.141.5.F45**

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Febrile Seizure/ Convulsion

Parent Information

Febrile Seizure

A Febrile Seizure is a common condition where a child has a convulsion or seizure brought on by a high temperature (fever).

Fever is when the temperature of the body rises above 38°C.

Fever is a sign of infection in the body and is often caused by a virus and sometimes by bacteria. A high fever does not necessarily mean your child has a serious illness. Fever itself is not harmful until it reaches 42°C.

Most children with fever suffer only minor discomfort. However, 1 in 25 children will have a febrile seizure at one time or another. This usually happens between the ages of 6 months and 4 years.

Febrile seizures are not harmful to the child and do not cause brain damage. They are, however, quite upsetting to parents.

Most children with febrile seizures only ever have one, occasionally some have another during future illnesses with fever. There is no increased risk of epilepsy in children who have febrile seizures.

Signs And Symptoms

During a febrile seizure:

- your child usually loses consciousness
- their muscles may stiffen or jerk
- your child may go red or blue in the face
- the seizures may last for several minutes
- when the movements stops, the child regains consciousness but remains sleepy afterwards

Treatment During A Seizure

- there is nothing you can do to make the convulsion stop
- the most important thing is to stay calm – don't panic
- place your child on a soft surface, lying on his or her side
- do not restrain your child
- do not put anything in their mouth including your fingers. Do not give your child any food, water, or medicine until the seizure is over and he or she is fully alert.
- try to watch exactly what happens, so that you can describe it later
- time how long their seizure lasts
- do not put a child who is having a seizure in the bath
- remove tight clothing, especially around the child's neck. Remove glasses so they do not break.

Call An Ambulance 911 If:

- the seizure lasts more than 3 minutes
- your child does not wake up when the seizure stops
- if your child looks very sick when the seizure stops

If The Seizure Stops In Less Than 3 Minutes:

- you should see your family doctor as soon as possible. If the doctor office is not open, take your child to the Emergency Department.

It may be okay to take the child in your own car – only do this if there are 2 adults (one to drive and one to look after the child). Drive very carefully. A few minutes longer will not make any important differences.

Fever Care

Since the fever is the body's natural response to infection, it is not always necessary to reduce a fever. Treatment of a fever with Tylenol or Ibuprofen does not prevent a febrile seizure. However, if your child is uncomfortable, follow the guidelines of fever management.