

FEBRILE SEIZURE

What is a febrile seizure?

It's a convulsion in children associated with a rise in body temperature, often from an infection. A febrile seizure is a convulsion in susceptible children provoked by an increase in body temperature. Febrile seizures are common, occurring in 2–5% of all children between the ages of 6 months and 5 years.

How serious is a febrile seizure?

Watching your child have febrile seizure can be very frightening. However, for all children, febrile seizures do not cause brain damage or any long-term problems.

A febrile seizure is not epilepsy (a child with epilepsy has two or more seizures that are not provoked by a fever). Furthermore, febrile seizures do not produce epilepsy. While the chance of developing epilepsy in a child who has had a febrile seizure is slightly higher than if the child had not had a febrile seizure, there is a better than 95% chance that your child will *not* develop epilepsy.

A febrile seizure usually lasts only a few minutes and goes away on its own. Most children who have a febrile seizure do not need any special tests and only need to see their family doctor so that the cause of their fever can be found and, if necessary, treated.

Can my child have another seizure?

Your child has a 25–30% chance of having another febrile seizure. The chance is slightly higher if your child is younger than 18 months, if there is a family history of febrile seizures, or if the fever wasn't very high when the seizure happened. The use of medications, like acetaminophen (Tylenol®) or ibuprofen (Advil®), to lower a fever do *not* prevent another seizure.

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

- Put your child on the floor or bed, away from any hard or sharp objects.
- Place your child on his/her side to allow any saliva or vomit to drain from the mouth.
- Do not put anything in his/her mouth—your child will not swallow his/her tongue.
- Do not try to stop your child's movements during the seizure.
- Try to remain calm and keep track of the time. Remember, most febrile seizures stop on their own within a few minutes.
- Call 911 if the seizure last longer than 5 minutes.

Can these seizures be prevented with medicine?

Perhaps, but most experts believe that the side effects from medicine are worse for the child than having another febrile seizure. In addition, even if your child does take medicine, it may not prevent another seizure.

