

Febrile Seizures and Your Child

What is a Febrile Seizure?

A febrile seizure or fever seizure is a seizure or convulsion that happens in a child when they have a fever. These seizures are very scary to watch but they are not as dangerous as they look. Most febrile seizures stop on their own.

During the seizure, the child may shake or move their arms and legs on either just one side of the body or on both sides of the body. Sometimes, they become stiff. Many times they are not awake and they cannot talk to you. They may roll their eyes back in their head. Sometimes the child will vomit or urinate during the seizure.

What Should I Do if My Child has a Febrile Seizure?

- Stay calm.
- Do not put anything in the mouth. During a seizure, it is not possible to swallow your tongue.
- Put your child on the floor on his side so he won't choke on saliva or vomit.
- Do not try to hold your child or stop the seizure movements.
- Remove anything around your child that could hurt them during the seizure.
- Do not put your child in a tub of water in an effort to cool them down.
- If possible, try to see how long the seizure lasts by looking at a clock or watch.

Will My Child Have More Seizures?

There is a small chance that your child will have another febrile seizure. This does not mean your child has epilepsy. Most children will outgrow seizures that are caused by fevers by the age of 5 years.

Are There Medicines That Can Prevent Seizures?

There are some medicines for seizures which might help to prevent another seizure. However, most healthcare providers believe that the side effects of the medicines are worse than having another seizure. Even if a medicine is used, some children will still have more fever seizures.

Medicines that lower your child's fever like acetaminophen (*Infant Tylenol, Children's Tylenol, Tempra*, and others) or ibuprofen (*Children's Motrin, Children's Advil*, and others) have been shown to make children more comfortable, but there is no proof to show that these medicines will prevent fever seizures.

Will Febrile Seizures Hurt My Child?

There is nothing to make us think that febrile seizures will cause brain damage, or learning or memory problems.

When Should I Call an Ambulance or Take My Child to the Emergency Department?

- If this is the first seizure.
- If the seizure lasts for more than 10 minutes...or if the seizure recurs within 24 hours.
- If there are other signs and symptoms like nausea, vomiting, a stiff neck, rash, problems with coordination, breathing problems, sleepiness, or confusion either before or after the seizure.

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For additional information on this and other health issues, visit: [MedlinePlus.gov](https://www.MedlinePlus.gov)