

FEBRILE SEIZURE

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

In some children, fevers can trigger seizures. A febrile seizure usually happens during the first few hours of a fever. The child may look strange for a few moments, then stiffen, twitch, and roll his eyes. He will be unresponsive for a short time, his breathing will be disturbed, and his skin may appear a little darker than usual. After the seizure, the child quickly returns to normal. Seizures usually last less than 1 minute but, although uncommon, can last for up to 15 minutes.

If your child has a febrile seizure, act immediately to prevent injury.

- Place her on the floor or bed away from any hard or sharp objects.
- Turn her head to the side so that any saliva or vomit can drain from her mouth.
- Do not put anything into her mouth; she will not swallow her tongue.
- Call your pediatrician.

Treatment

If your child has a febrile seizure, Consult your pediatrician right away. He or she will want to examine your child in order to determine the cause of your child's fever. It is more important to determine and treat the cause of the fever rather than the seizure. A spinal tap may be done to be sure your child does not have a serious infection like meningitis, especially if your child is younger than 1 year of age.

In general, physicians do not recommend treatment of a simple febrile seizure with preventive medications. However, this should be discussed with your pediatrician. In cases of prolonged or repeated seizures, the recommendation may be different.

Anti-fever drugs like acetaminophen and ibuprofen can help lower a fever, but they do not prevent febrile seizures. Your pediatrician will talk to you about the best ways to take care of your child's fever.

If your child has had a febrile seizure, do not fear the worst. These types of seizures are not dangerous to your child and do not cause long-term health problems. If you have concerns about this issue or anything related to your child's health, talk to your pediatrician.

Remember

While febrile seizures may be very scary, they are harmless to the child. Simple Febrile seizures do not cause brain damage, nervous system problems, paralysis, mental retardation, or death.