

## **FEBRILE SEIZURE/CONVULSION FACT SHEET**

A febrile seizure is a fit that occurs when a child has a fever. It's a relatively common childhood condition and not serious in most cases. Febrile seizures are also sometimes called febrile convulsions.

### **Frightening but harmless**

Seeing a child having a seizure, particularly if they have no previous history of fits, can be frightening and distressing for the parents. However, while febrile seizures may be frightening, most are harmless and do not pose a threat to a child's health.

### **WHAT TO DO DURING A SEIZURE**

If your child is having a febrile seizure, place them in the recovery position. Lay them on their side, on a soft surface, with their face turned to one side. If they may be sick, this position will stop them swallowing any vomit. It will keep their airway open and help to prevent injury.

Stay with your child and try to make a note of how long it lasts.

If it is your child's first seizure, or it lasts longer than five minutes, take them to the nearest hospital as soon as possible, or call 999 for an ambulance. While it is unlikely that there is anything seriously wrong, it is best to be sure.

If your child has had febrile seizures before and the seizure lasts for less than five minutes, phone your GP or NHS on 111 for advice.

Try not to put anything, including medication, in your child's mouth during a seizure as there is a slight chance that they might bite their tongue.

Almost all children make a complete recovery, and there is not a single reported case of a child dying as the direct result of a febrile seizure.

During most seizures the child's body becomes stiff, they lose consciousness and their arms and legs twitch. Some children may wet themselves. This is what's known as a tonic clonic seizure. Your child may also vomit and foam at the mouth and their eyes may roll back.

The seizure usually lasts for less than five minutes. Following a febrile seizure, your child may be sleepy for up to an hour afterwards.

Complex febrile seizures tend to last longer than 15 minutes, and the symptoms may only affect one area of your child's body.

### **Seeking medical advice**

If your child has previously been diagnosed as having febrile seizures, you may not need to seek emergency care. However, it is recommended that you telephone your GP

or NHS 111. Also, contact your GP or NHS 111 if your child shows signs and symptoms of [dehydration](#) (a lack of fluid in their body). The signs of dehydration are:

- a dry mouth
- sunken eyes
- a lack of tears when crying
- a sunken fontanelle – this is the soft spot that is usually found at the top of a young child's head

### **EMERGENCY ADVICE**

You should take your child to the nearest hospital as soon as possible if they have no previous history of seizures and you think they have had one.

Although very rare, a seizure can sometimes be a sign of a more serious illness, such as [meningitis](#), which requires emergency medical treatment.

Take your child to the nearest hospital or dial 999 immediately to request an ambulance if your child has any of the symptoms below:

- your child is having a seizure that is lasting longer than five minutes and showing no signs of stopping
- your child has a blotchy red rash that does not fade or change colour when you place a glass against it (such a rash is not always present)
- your child is having breathing difficulties