

Febrile Seizure

Weight (Kg):

What is a febrile seizure?

It is a seizure (convulsion) that is caused by a fever. The child becomes unresponsive and may stiffen or have jerky movements of the arms and legs. The eyes may roll back and the child's color may appear pale or blue around the mouth. The child may be sleepy for a short period after the seizure. The seizure may last seconds to minutes.

Any temperature above 38C is considered fever and can potentially cause seizure. It is not the height of fever that causes the seizure. Seizures cannot be prevented by giving acetaminophen or ibuprofen.

Febrile seizures are usually caused by typical viral infections such as colds and flus.

How common are they?

Febrile seizures are very common. Approximately 4% (1 in 25) of all children will have a febrile seizure. They occur between the ages of 6 months to 5 years old.

Do they cause brain damage?

No. Febrile seizures are not harmful to your child although they can be frightening to observe. They do not cause brain damage, mental retardation, or death. Children continue to learn and develop the same as other children.

Will it happen again?

There is a 33% (1 in 3) chance that your child will have a second febrile seizure. The older the child, the less likely this will happen. They typically outgrow them by 4-5 years old.

Will my child have epilepsy?

Febrile seizures do not cause epilepsy. The risk of developing epilepsy is only slightly higher than children who do not have febrile seizures. 97% of children who have febrile seizures do not develop epilepsy.

Can I prevent a febrile seizure?

No. Even giving ibuprofen and acetaminophen will not prevent a seizure.

Royal University Hospital
Children's Emergency Department

Affix patient label here

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Weight (Kg):

What should I do if my child has another seizure?

Do:

Stay calm.

Lay your child on the floor.

Loosen tight clothing.

Observe your child.

Time the seizure.

If your child vomits, wipe outside the mouth.

When your child stops seizing, place them in the recovery position (lay them on their side).

Do Not:

Put anything in the mouth.

Restrain or hold your child down. This will cause bruising and harm.

Put your child in the bath to cool. It will not stop the seizure and may risk aspiration.

Feed or give medications. Wait until your child is fully awake.

Call 911 if:

1. Your child turns blue or stops breathing.
2. Your child has been seizing for more than 5 minutes.

Go to the Emergency Department if:

1. Your child has had a seizure.
2. Your child is unusually sleepy or drowsy.

You can also call the HealthLine if you are ever worried or have any questions about your child.

Saskatchewan Health Line: 811