

Febrile Convulsions (Convulsions with Fever) Brief Version

What are convulsions?

Convulsions are also called seizures. They are sudden, uncontrolled jerks of the muscles. They can be caused by a high fever. They are the most common type of convulsion and are harmless. They most often occur when the fever is about 104°F (40°C). A fever can be caused by an infection in any part of the body. Fever by itself does not cause brain damage.

Each seizure lasts 1 to 10 minutes without any treatment. For most of the children, a seizure from a fever will only happen once in their life. Some have one to three more seizures over the next few years. These type of seizures usually stop by age 5 or 6 years.

What should I do when my child has a convulsion?

- **Protect your child's airway.** Place your child on the side or stomach to help drain saliva. If the child throws up, help clear the mouth. Use a suction bulb if available. If your child's breathing becomes noisy, pull the jaw and chin forward. Don't try to force anything into your child's mouth.

How can I take care of my child?

- **Fever.** The seizures usually occur during the first day of an illness and often occur before the parent is even aware that the child is ill. There is no evidence that Tylenol or other fever medications can prevent a febrile convulsion. You may give your child fever medication if he/she is in discomfort or pain.
- **Use light covers.** Don't cover your child with more than one blanket when he is sick. Bundling during sleep can push the temperature up 1 or 2 degrees.
- **Give fluids.** Make sure your child drinks plenty of fluids.

Call a rescue squad (911) IMMEDIATELY if the febrile convulsion continues more than 15 minutes.

Call your child's doctor right away:

- After the seizure is over.
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