

## Does this mean my child has epilepsy?

No. Febrile seizures only happen when your child is ill with a temperature.

Epilepsy causes seizures even without a high temperature.

Febrile seizures do not cause epilepsy but children who have febrile seizures have a very slightly higher chance of developing epilepsy than those who don't (2 in 100 compared with 1 in 100).

## Further resources

### NHS Choices Febrile Seizures

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/febrile-seizures/>

## Useful numbers

**Practice Plus (Brighton walk-in centre / GP service) 0333 321 0946**  
Open every day from 8am to 8pm,  
including bank holidays.  
[www.practiceplusbrightonstation.nhs.uk](http://www.practiceplusbrightonstation.nhs.uk)

For out of hours GP service or advice  
ring **NHS 111**

**Royal Alexandra Children's Hospital**  
**01273 696955 Ext. 2593**  
**Children's Emergency Department**

Please be aware that CED staff will not  
be able to give you medical advice over  
the telephone.



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## Febrile seizures

Children's Emergency Department

## What is a febrile seizure?

*Febrile* means having a fever and *seizure* is another word used to describe a fit or convulsion. A febrile seizure is when your child has a fit when they have a fever. Febrile seizures do not hurt your child and do not cause brain damage.

## What causes febrile seizures?

In some children, a fever of 38°C and over can trigger a seizure. The fever is usually caused by common infections like a cold, flu or tonsillitis. However your child may need to be seen by a health care professional to make sure they don't have a serious illness.

## How common are febrile seizures?

They are quite common. They occur in 1 in every 50 children between the ages of 6 months and 5 years.

## Do febrile seizures run in the family?

You may find that there is a close family member who suffered with febrile seizures as a child too. However febrile seizures are not directly passed down through the family.

## What do febrile seizures look like?

### You may notice that:

- Your child is unresponsive
- Your child goes stiff
- They jerk or twitch their arms or legs
- Their eyes roll back in their head

After the seizure your child may want to sleep for an hour or so. They will not remember the seizure.

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

Febrile seizures can be extremely frightening to witness. The most important thing to do is to stay with your child and put them in the recovery position.

A video on how to do this can be found on the NHS Choices website here: [www.nhs.uk/Video/Pages/recovery-position.aspx](http://www.nhs.uk/Video/Pages/recovery-position.aspx)

If you get a chance, try to note a start time for the seizure. Make sure you clear the area around your child so they don't hurt themselves, and **do not** put anything in their mouth.

## Call 999 if:

- The seizure lasts 5 minutes or more
- your child stops breathing or has difficulty breathing at any time.

If the seizure stops itself in less than 5 minutes, speak with 111 or visit your GP to make sure that there are no concerns about a more serious infection.

## My child has had one febrile seizure. Will they have another one?

One third of children who have had a febrile seizure will have another one in their childhood. It is unlikely to happen again during the same illness.

There is no medicine to prevent them from happening.

You may want to give your child Paracetamol or Ibuprofen when they have a fever. There is no proof that these medicines will stop a seizure but it can keep your child more comfortable.