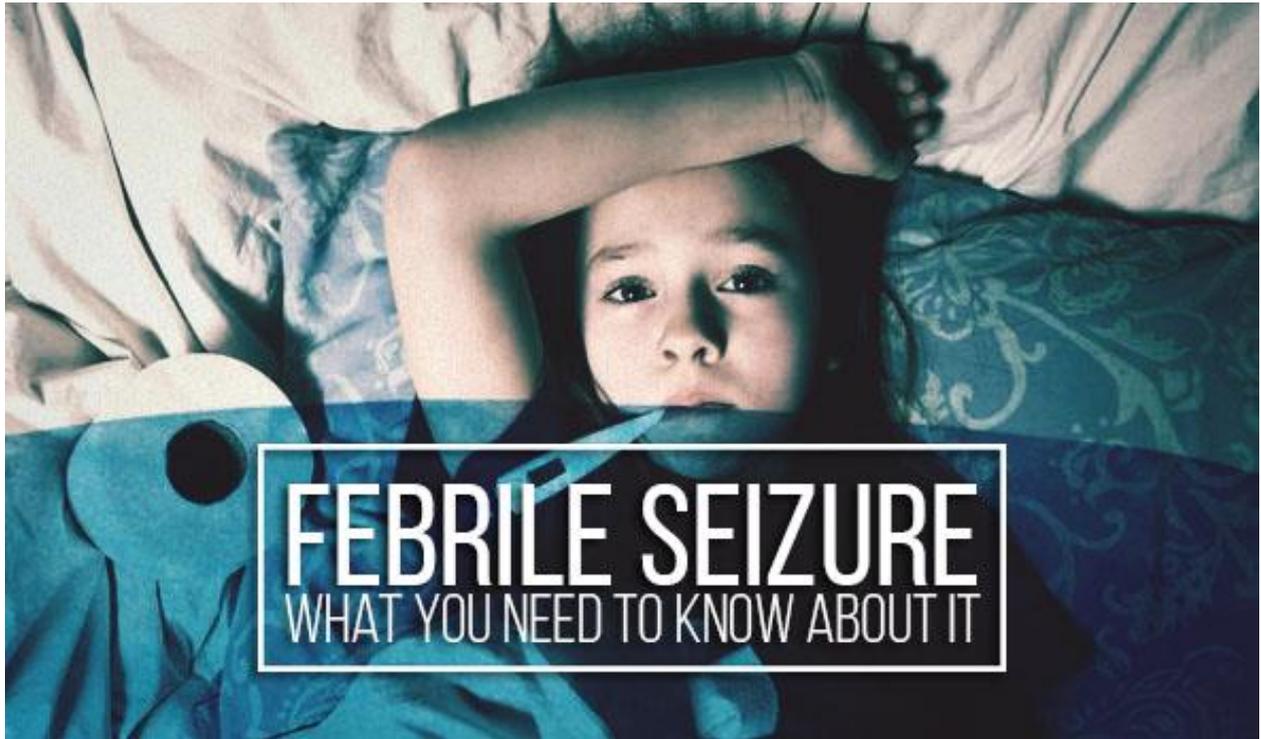


Febrile convulsions



Febrile seizures (febrile convulsions) are fits that can happen when a child has a fever. They most often happen between the ages of six months and three years.

Key points to remember

- febrile convulsions are a common childhood problem
- they are usually caused by a fever with a viral infection
- they can look scary, but very rarely cause long-term problems
- the most important thing is to try to keep calm, and lie your child down on their side, in the recovery position, until the convulsion is finished
- dial 999 in UK or 9999 Oman (use the appropriate emergency number in other countries) and ask for urgent medical help if the convulsion lasts more than 5 minutes, or if your child has trouble breathing, or you are worried
- Take your child to the nearest hospital or dial 999 for an ambulance. While it's unlikely that there's anything seriously wrong, it's important to get your child checked.
- when your child is having a convulsion do not put anything in their mouth and do not put them into a bath or shower to cool down

Febrile convulsions

What is a febrile convulsion?

A febrile convulsion is a seizure that happens with a fever.

Many infections in children cause fevers. In some children the fever triggers a convulsion. It is usually related to a fast rise in temperature, not how high the temperature is.

Febrile convulsions are also called fever fits, or febrile seizures. Febrile convulsions are common. They are not the same as epilepsy.

What puts my child at risk of getting a febrile convulsion?

- between 2 and 5 percent of children will have a febrile convulsion
- febrile convulsions usually happen between the ages of 6 months and 5 years
- there is a higher chance of your child having a febrile convulsion if a close relative had febrile convulsions as a child

What happens during a febrile convulsion?

Your child becomes unresponsive. They may become stiff or their arms and legs may start to twitch or jerk. Their eyes may roll back. Sometimes they are floppy; and may wet or soil themselves.

This is the convulsion, fit or seizure. It usually lasts a minute or two and stops by itself. At the time, it will seem to last much longer. After the jerking or stiffness stops, your child will usually sleep for a while (up to an hour). Some children appear to be very upset, and then become sleepy.

Seeing a febrile convulsion can be very frightening. This is especially so if it is the first time you have seen one.

Febrile convulsions

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

Most febrile convulsions stop by themselves.

The most important thing to do is to keep your child safe while they are having a convulsion.

- lie your child down on their side (recovery position)
- do not put anything in their mouth
- do not put your child in the bath or shower to cool them down
- loosen their clothes around their face and neck
- wait a few minutes for the convulsion to stop. Check the time if you can to see how long the convulsion lasts

Dial 999 within UK or **9999** in Oman (use the appropriate emergency number in other countries) and ask for urgent medical help if:

- the convulsion lasts longer than 5 minutes
- your child is having trouble breathing
- your child looks very unwell
- your child is not waking up and responding after the convulsion

When should I see the doctor?

You should take your child to see a doctor after the convulsion finishes. The doctor will check to see what is causing the fever.

Most children are sleepy after a convulsion, but if they are hard to rouse, or if you are worried about them for other reasons, see a doctor urgently.

Will a febrile convulsion harm my child?

A febrile convulsion in a healthy child hardly ever causes long term harm.

Febrile convulsions

If my child has had one febrile convulsion will they have another?

Once your child has had 1 febrile convulsion, they have a higher chance of having a second one with another illness. The risk lessens as your child gets older.

10 to 15 percent of children have more than 1 febrile convulsion in the same illness. Once the seizure has finished, you should get your child checked by a doctor again.

If your child starts a second convulsion before waking from the first one you should dial 999 UK Oman 9999 (use the appropriate emergency number in other countries) for urgent medical help.

By the age of 5 years, children have usually grown out of febrile convulsions.

Will my child develop epilepsy?

Febrile convulsions do not cause epilepsy. A small number of children who have a febrile convulsion also develop epilepsy.

What causes febrile convulsions?

Most febrile convulsions occur during a viral infection such as a cold with a fever. A rapid rise in temperature, rather than the height of the temperature itself, is what causes a convulsion.

A small number of febrile convulsions are caused by bacterial infections, such as pneumonia, urine infection, ear infection or meningitis. Bacterial infections can be serious, so your child should be checked by a doctor after every febrile convulsion.

How are febrile convulsions treated?

Most febrile convulsions stop by themselves in 1 or 2 minutes. They do not need any treatment. The most important thing to do is to keep your child safe while they are having a convulsion.

Febrile convulsions

If the convulsion lasts longer than 5 minutes, dial 999 UK Oman 9999 (use the appropriate emergency number in other countries) and ask for urgent medical help.

Does my child need to stay in hospital?

If your child recovers completely from the febrile convulsion, and they do not have a serious infection, they do not need to stay in hospital.

How can I prevent my child having a febrile convulsion?

There is no way to prevent febrile convulsions.

Keep your child cool and comfortable when they have a fever. The best ways to bring your child's temperature down are by:

- undressing your child so that they are just wearing a single layer (for example a singlet and pants)
- making sure the room is not too hot or too cold

Remember:

- don't put anything in your child's mouth when they are having a convulsion and
- don't put your child into a bath or shower to cool down

If your child is miserable because of the fever, you can give paracetamol to make them more comfortable. You must follow the dosage instructions on the bottle. It is dangerous to give more than the recommended dose. Giving regular paracetamol or ibuprofen will not prevent a febrile convulsion.