

PARENT EDUCATION AND RESOURCES

Febrile Seizure*

- A febrile (fever) seizure is a seizure caused by a fever
- These seizures might appear scary but are rarely dangerous
- A fever seizure might look like: body stiffening; twitching of the face, arms and legs, or both; eye rolling; jerking of the arms and legs; staring; or loss of consciousness.
- Fever seizures generally last less than 1 minute but can last up to 15 minutes.
- Your child might appear not to be breathing, and the skin colour might become darker. If so, call 911 or emergency personnel and lay the child on the floor on his or her back and DO NOT place your fingers in the child's mouth.
- Simple fever seizures often occur in the first 24 hours of the illness and only occur once. If the seizure happens again, your child should be seen again.
- Fever seizures do not cause brain damage or paralysis.
- Fever seizures occur in 2% to 5% of all children between the ages of 6 months and 5 years.
- A child who has fever seizures has only a slightly increased risk of having a seizure problem compared with that of a child who has never had a febrile seizure.
- Fever seizures tend to run in families.
- Fever seizures can occur again with subsequent fever illnesses. Medicine is generally not given to prevent simple fever seizures.
- Use of medicines such as acetaminophen (Tylenol®) or ibuprofen (Advil®, Motrin®) for fevers have not been shown to prevent fever seizures.

*Ann Emerg Med. 2003;41:215-222