

Name of Child: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

# Febrile Seizures

Febrile seizures can be scary to watch. Parents often feel helpless and fear their child could be hurt or may die. This is not true. A febrile seizure usually does not hurt the brain or cause death.

## What are febrile seizures?

Sometimes, when an infant or child has a fever, he or she may have a seizure. Seizures are also called convulsions or fits.

Normally, nerves in the brain communicate with one another by sending tiny electrical signals. A fever may change these signals. If these signals get out of control, the child may have a seizure.

Febrile seizures usually happen between the ages of 6 months and 6 years. Sometimes, other people in the family have had febrile seizures, too. We do not know why some children have febrile seizures, and others don't.

## Signs and symptoms

The child has a fever and a seizure. During a seizure the child may pass out, fall and the eyes stare or roll up. The child may drool. The body may become stiff and the arms and legs may jerk or twitch. An infant may repeat some movements that just don't seem right. The child may wet his or her pants during the seizure.

Febrile seizures are usually short, lasting less than five minutes. After the seizure, the child may be clumsy, weak or want to sleep.

# Treatments:

## If your child has a fever:

- Give medicine that will lower your child's temperature, like acetaminophen (Tylenol). Do not give aspirin.
- Put cool, wet cloths on your child's forehead and arm pits.

## If your child has a seizure:

- Keep calm. If there is a watch or clock nearby, check what time it is.
- Protect your child from getting hurt.
  - Move away furniture and things the child could get hurt on
  - Place the child on something soft, or the floor.
  - Place the child on his or her side.
- Do not hold the child to try to stop the seizure.
- Do not put anything into the child's mouth.
- Stay near the child until he or she is awake.
- Do not offer food or drink until the child is fully awake.
- If the seizure lasts longer than 5 minutes or the child has trouble breathing call 911.

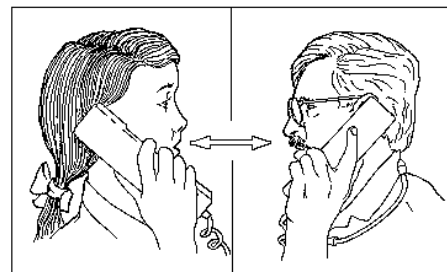


**Place the child on his or her side safely on the floor.**

If your child has febrile seizures that last longer than 5 minutes, your doctor may give you some medicine to stop a seizure. These medicines are given by rectal suppository. They help stop seizures, they don't prevent them.

Most children with febrile seizures outgrow them, and never have seizures when they don't have fevers. Children have a greater chance of having seizures without a fever if:

- the febrile seizure lasts longer than 15 minutes
- the child's febrile seizure showed movement in only one part of his or her body



**If the seizure lasts longer than 5 minutes or the child has trouble breathing call 911.**

- the child has more than one febrile seizure within 24 hours
- other people in the family have seizures that are not febrile seizures
- the child has had other brain problems.

## Now that you've read this

- Tell your child's nurse or doctor what you will do the next time your child has a fever. (Check when done.)
- Tell your child's nurse or doctor what you will do if your child has a seizure. (Check when done.)



If you have any questions or concerns,

- call your child's doctor or
- call \_\_\_\_\_

If you want to know more about child health and illness,  
visit our library at The Emily Center at Phoenix Children's Hospital  
1919 East Thomas Road  
Phoenix, AZ 85016  
602-546-1400  
[www.phoenixchildrenshospital.com](http://www.phoenixchildrenshospital.com)

**Disclaimer**

The information provided at this site is intended to be general information, and is provided for educational purposes only. It is not intended to take the place of examination, treatment, or consultation with a physician. Phoenix Children's Hospital urges you to contact your physician with any questions you may have about a medical condition.

#256 • Written by Nancy Quay, MS, RN • Illustrated by Dennis Swain  
Friday, December 29, 2006 • DRAFT for family review





# The Emily Center

## Febrile Seizures

### Diagnosis/Disease/Illness

Si usted desea esta información en español,  
por favor pídasela a su enfermero o doctor.

Name of Health Care Provider: \_\_\_\_\_ Number: 256  
For office use: Date returned: \_\_\_\_\_  db  nb

## Family Review of Handout

**Health care providers:** Please teach families with this handout.

**Families:** Please let us know what you think of this handout.

Would you say this handout is hard to read?  Yes  No

easy to read?  Yes  No

Please circle the parts of the handout that were hard to understand.

Would you say this handout is interesting to read?  Yes  No

Why or why not?

Would you do anything differently after reading  
this handout?  Yes  No

If yes, what?

After reading this handout, do you have any  
questions about the subject?  Yes  No

If yes, what?

Is there anything you don't like about the drawings?

Yes  No

If yes, what?

What changes would you make in this handout to make it better or easier to understand?

Please return your review of this handout to your nurse or doctor or send it to the address below.

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**Thank you for helping us!**