

Febrile Seizures

This leaflet offers more information about febrile seizures. If you have any further questions or concerns, please speak to the staff member in charge of your child's care.

What is a febrile seizure?

A febrile seizure is a fit that happens when your child has a high temperature. They are most common between the ages of 18 months and three years but can occur anytime from six months to six years old. Febrile seizures are rare in children younger than six months or older than six years.

Febrile seizures are often linked to infections such as ear, nose and throat infections and urinary infections. In very rare cases, febrile seizures can happen after a child has a vaccination.

Some children (around 3 in 10) will have more than one febrile seizure in childhood. The risk of having a second febrile seizure is higher if your child is younger than one year old when they have the first febrile seizure.

Febrile seizures are NOT epilepsy. The chance of developing epilepsy in a child who has had a febrile seizure is about 1 in 50, compared to a 1 in 100 chance of epilepsy in those children without a history of febrile seizures.

What are the signs and symptoms?

Most febrile seizures last between one and five minutes. During the seizure your child:

- Will become stiff and may jerk their arms, legs or body
- Will become dazed and confused

- May fall to the floor
- May roll back their eyes
- May hold their breath, causing them to look pale or a little blue
- May bite their tongue or wet/soil themselves.

After the seizure, your child may be sleepy for up to an hour and may also become upset.

What treatments are available?

Usually, no treatment is needed for a febrile seizure. Sometimes treatment is needed for the infection that has caused the high temperature.

Is there anything I can do to help my child?

Unfortunately, we do not have a way to stop children having febrile seizures. When your child has a high temperature you can give them paracetamol and ibuprofen (following instructions on the bottle) which should make your child more comfortable but will not prevent them having a seizure.

You should also encourage your child to drink plenty of fluid when unwell. You should avoid wrapping them in layers of clothing or blankets, sponging/bathing them with cold water or taking them into bed with you.

What should I do if my child has another febrile seizure?

If your child has another seizure:

- Stay calm
- Place them on a soft surface and away from sharp or hard objects

- Lie them on their side and tilt their head back a little, this helps open their air passages and stops them swallowing vomit
- Don't put anything in their mouth (including fluids, medicine and fingers)
- Loosen any clothing, especially around the neck
- If the seizure lasts less than five minutes, you can call NHS 111 for advice.

Bring your child to the Children's Emergency Department if:

- They don't wake up fully within an hour of the seizure
- This is their second seizure in 24 hours.

Call an ambulance if:

- **Your child holds their breath for more than 30 seconds.**
- **The seizure lasts for longer than five minutes.**

Contact us

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact the Emergency Department on 020 8725 2666 and ask to be put through to the Paediatric Emergency Department.

For more information leaflets on conditions, procedures, treatments and services offered at our hospitals, please visit www.stgeorges.nhs.uk

Additional services

Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS)

PALS can offer you on-the-spot advice and information when you have comments or concerns about our services or the care you have received. You can visit the PALS office between 9.30am and 4.30pm, Monday to Friday in the main corridor between Grosvenor and Lanesborough wings (near the lift foyer).

Tel: 020 8725 2453 **Email:** pals@stgeorges.nhs.uk

NHS Choices

NHS Choices provides online information and guidance on all aspects of health and healthcare, to help you make decisions about your health.

Web: www.nhs.uk

NHS 111

You can call 111 when you need medical help fast but it's not a 999 emergency. NHS 111 is available 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. Calls are free from landlines and mobile phones.

Tel: 111

AccessAble

You can download accessibility guides for all our services by searching 'St George's Hospital' on the AccessAble website (www.accessable.co.uk). The guides are designed to ensure everyone – including those with accessibility needs – can access our hospital and community sites with confidence.

