

## FEBRILE SEIZURES

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Febrile seizures are those seizures which occur due to a sudden spike in body temperature with a **fever of 100.4F or more**. These seizures do not have other underlying seizure-provoking cause or disease like central nervous system or brain infections, electrolyte abnormalities, drug withdrawal, trauma, genetic predisposition or known epilepsy.

They occur **between 6 months to 60 months** (5 years) of age and are provoked with fever. Fever may be present at the time of seizure or develop soon after the seizure. Febrile seizures are extremely common, **occurring in up to 4% of children** in this age group.

These seizures are of 2 types- simple and complex. In a **simple febrile seizure**, seizure occurs **once in 24 hours**, involves the whole body and lasts **less than 15 minutes**. Complex febrile seizures are those which are focal (meaning only one side of the body can be involved in the seizure), OR for a longer duration of more than 15 minutes, OR recur within 24 hours and/or do not recover completely within 1 hour.

When your child suffers from a fever provoked seizure, certain questions come in the parents' mind. This is an attempt to answer a few of the common questions that we are asked in OPD by the parents.

### ❓ What should I do if my child gets a seizure in fever?

- ✓ If a child has a seizure, you should make them lie flat turned on one side. Do not hold the hands down and clear the area around them so that they don't get injured.
- ✓ You should not put anything in their mouth like onion, shoe, spoon or your hand. If the child bites on anything put in mouth, it can go into the airway and cause problem.
- ✓ Note the time for which the child has a seizure and bring them to your nearest hospital.

- ✓ Take precautions whenever the child has fever and especially if is a previous history of febrile seizure in this child or in the family.

❓ **What precautions should I take to prevent a fever triggered seizure in my child?**

- ✓ If your child has developed fever, you should take precautions to bring down the fever as soon as possible.
- ✓ If they have a fever of more than 100.4 F, then fever medicine called Paracetamol should be given.
- ✓ If the fever goes beyond 102 F, then tepid sponging with room temperature water should be done.
- ✓ Keep temperature check with a thermometer.
- ✓ Keep an eye out for the child developing fever if they have cold, or have received vaccination.
- ✓ Start prophylactic medication if your doctor has prescribed it.

❓ **Can my child have febrile seizures again?**

- ✓ Around 30% of children with a febrile seizure can have another episode till age 5 years.
- ✓ Those who get the first seizure before 18 months and those who have a brother or sister with febrile seizures have a tendency to have a repeat episode.

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❓ **Can my child develop epilepsy later on in life?**

- ✓ Out of the children who have febrile seizures, only 1% may develop epilepsy in life.
- ✓ The risk factors to develop an epilepsy include having long duration seizures with fever, having frequent and multiple seizures, having a family history of seizures and having seizures before age 6 months.

❓ **Will my child require any investigations if they get a febrile seizure?**

- ✓ Usually, no investigations are required for a simple febrile seizure; these are often self-limiting and will not occur beyond the age of 5 years and without fever.
- ✓ Your Paediatrician may advise a few investigations if there is a complex febrile seizure, meaning a seizure in which one side of the body is involved, if it is a long seizure lasting more than 15 minutes, if the child is not developing properly or if the child gets a seizure without fever. The investigations done routinely include blood tests, MRI or CT scan of Brain and EEG.

**❓ Will my child require medications for febrile seizures?**

- ✓ Your Paediatrician or Paediatric Neurologist may prescribe a medication which has to be used for 2-3 days when the child gets fever. This medicine minimizes the risk of getting a seizure in fever.
- ✓ Long term medication is not required for simple febrile seizures.
- ✓ If seizures are not just simple febrile seizures, then they might require seizure medication. Your doctor will advise as per the situation.

**❓ When should a Paediatric Neurologist be consulted?**

- ✓ If your child has multiple seizures in one day
- ✓ If the seizures are very long and if the child does not recover completely in 1 hour
- ✓ If the child is not developing properly
- ✓ If the child has seizures without fever
- ✓ Seizures in fever which start before the age 6 months or occur even after 5 years age

Febrile seizures are a very common problem seen in children. Though often benign in nature, a parent must know the various aspects around it for the care of children.



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