

# Febrile seizure in children

Following your visit to the Brisbane Northside Emergency Centre, the doctor is happy that you are well enough to go home. This fact sheet will provide you with additional information to assist you with your recovery.

## Signs and symptoms

- Your child may look hot and flushed. Prior to the seizure they may appear dazed and then lose consciousness.
- Their body may become stiff, then start shaking and twitching.
- The seizure may last from a few seconds to a few minutes.
- Your child may be drowsy or irritated after they regain consciousness.

### Call an ambulance if any of the following occur:

- The seizure lasts longer than 5 minutes.
- Your child has any breathing difficulties during or after the seizure.
- The child does not wake up after the seizure.
- Your child looks very sick when the seizure stops.

*Please call us or return to our centre if you have any concerns. Alternatively, your general practitioner has received information regarding your visit to **BNE** and can address any concerns you may have.*

## What is a febrile seizure

Febrile seizure (or convulsion or fits) can occur when children have fevers of 38.5 degrees and above. The seizures usually occur in children between the ages of 6 months to 5 years but are most common from 12 to 18 month old. The illness causing the fever is usually a common cold (a viral illness). In this case it does not require medication for the first 24 hours of the illness.

In most cases the seizure will not reoccur. 3 out of 10 children will have further seizures. This is more likely if they were less than 15 months old when the first seizure happened or the parents or siblings have had febrile seizures.

Having a febrile seizure does **NOT** mean that your child is an epileptic. However, a child who has had a febrile seizure has a slightly increased risk for developing epilepsy especially if there is a family history.

Febrile seizures are scary to witness but are fairly common. In most cases febrile seizures do not lead into other health problems. If you are concerned you should always take the child to see a doctor.

## Treatment

- Protect your child by laying them on their side. This protects them from injuring themselves. **Do NOT** restrain them or put anything in their mouth.
- Make a note of the time and what you have witnessed during the seizure (ie. child's movement and behaviour and duration of the seizure).
- **Do NOT** place your child in the bath or shower when they are having a seizure.
- When the seizure stops, try to gently lower your child's body temperature by removing clothing. Avoid cooling the child too quickly as this may increase shivering as it is body's way to increase temperature quickly. **Do NOT** give cold baths or showers.
- When your child regains consciousness you can give them paracetamol (Panadol) and/or ibuprofen (Nurofen, Panafen). Fever is the body's natural and vital response to infection. It is not always necessary to reduce a fever. Treatment of fever with paracetamol or ibuprofen does not prevent a febrile seizure.
- You should take your child to see a doctor after a seizure for a check up and to rule out serious illness. If you are driving make sure there are two adults in the car in case your child should have another seizure on the way.

**OPEN 24 HOURS. 7 DAYS**

**627 Rode Road Chermside**

*Located between The Prince Charles and Holy Spirit Northside Private Hospitals.*

**[www.emergencyBNE.com.au](http://www.emergencyBNE.com.au)**