

What to do for Fever in Children

This fact sheet provides information for parents and caregivers about what to do when a child has a fever.

If Your Child Has a Fever:

- Take off heavy clothing and blankets.
- Dress the child in lightweight clothing and keep the room temperature at 20°C.
- Give lukewarm sponge or tub baths. Avoid cool baths and never use alcohol rubs to bring down a fever.
- Offer cool fluids frequently when the child is awake.
- Give acetaminophen or ibuprofen for fever and muscle pain in the dose recommended on the package (unless your doctor says otherwise). **DO NOT GIVE ASPIRIN.** Children under 18 should not take acetylsalicylic acid (ASA) or products containing ASA. Your pharmacist can provide advice on appropriate over-the-counter medications for treating fever.
- Allow the child to rest and stay at home
- if possible for 6 days or more, so the virus isn't spread to other children.
- Teach the child to cover his or her mouth and nose with a tissue when coughing or sneezing and then to throw the tissue away.
- Wash your hands often with soap and warm water or an alcohol-based hand sanitizer and teach your child to do so after wiping the nose.
- If you don't have a tissue, cough or sneeze into your upper arm, not into your hands, and teach your child to do the same.
- Don't share eating utensils (e.g., cups or straws), toothbrushes or towels with your child.
- See *How to Take a Temperature*.

What are Fever Seizures?

A fever seizure is a convulsion (a fit) in a child caused by a rapid rise of body temperature to over 39°C (102.2°F). Most seizures occur within the first day of the child becoming sick and not always when the fever is the highest. Sometimes the seizure is the first sign of a fever in an infant or child.

Signs of a Fever Seizure

Your child may:

- Experience sudden stiffness of the muscles of the face, arms, or legs on both sides of the body.
- Begin to have jerky movements.
- Fall if standing.
- Pass urine.
- Stop breathing and may begin to turn blue.
- Not respond to voice or touch.
- Cry or moan.

A simple fever seizure will stop by itself with a few seconds to 5 minutes. It is followed by a brief period where the child is sleepy or confused. A complex fever seizure lasts longer than 15 minutes, occurs unevenly affecting one part of the body more than the rest, or happens again during the same illness.

If Your Child Has a Fever Seizure

- Stay calm.
- Leave your child on the floor (you may want to slip a blanket under the child if the floor is hard).
- Loosen tight clothing, especially around the neck.
- Move the child only if he or she is in a dangerous location.
- Turn the child on his or her side or stomach to protect the head and to prevent the child from choking if he or she throws up.
- Don't hold your child down.
- Don't force anything into the mouth as this increases the risk of injury.
- Observe the child closely and time the fever seizure so you can tell the doctor what happened.

When to Seek Medical Attention

- If the child recovers on his/her own, call your doctor or Telehealth for advice.
- Take your child to see a doctor as soon as possible after the first fever seizure.
- If the seizure lasts longer than 5 minutes, call 911 and have an ambulance take your child to the hospital.
- If your child has repeated seizures during the same illness or if this looks like a new type of seizure for your child, take the child to see a doctor.

Managing Further Fever Seizures

If your child has a history of fever seizures and has a fever:

- Give your child acetaminophen at the first sign of fever.
- Sponge or bathe your child in lukewarm water; you may want to apply cool washcloths to the forehead and neck.
- Offer your child cool drinks.

For more information:

Call Telehealth

- 1-866-797-0000;
- TTY: 1-866-797-0007

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