



We can provide interpreters for a variety of languages, information in larger print or other formats (e.g. audio) - please call us on 01932 723553.

To use the Text Relay service, prefix all numbers with 18001.

اگر نیاز به ترجمہ دارید، لطفاً با شماره 01932 723553 تماس بگیرید۔

ਜੇ ਤੁਹਾਨੂੰ ਤਰਜਮੇ ਦੀ ਲੋੜ ਹੈ ਤਾਂ ਕਿਰਪਾ ਕਰਕੇ ਇਸ ਨੰਬਰ ਤੇ ਫੋਨ ਕਰੋ: 01932 723553

اگر آپ اس کا اردو زبان میں ترجمہ چاہتے ہیں، تو براؤکرم اس فون نمبر 01932 723553 پر رابطہ کریں

Se precisa de uma tradução por favor contacte: 01932 723553

আপনার অনুবাদের দরকার হলে এখানে যোগাযোগ করুন : 01932 723553

यदि आपको अनुवाद की ज़रूरत है तो कृपया इस नंबर पर फोन करें: 01932 723553

Jeżeli chcemy, aby te informacje w innym języku, proszę zadzwonić 01932 723553

Ashford Hospital
London Road
Ashford, Middlesex
TW15 3AA
Tel: **01784 884488**

St. Peter's Hospital
Guildford Road
Chertsey, Surrey
KT16 0PZ.
Tel: **01932 872000**

Website: www.ashfordstpeters.nhs.uk

Febrile Convulsion

Paediatrics Department



Further Information

We endeavour to provide an excellent service at all times, but should you have any concerns please, in the first instance, raise these with the Matron, Senior Nurse or Manager on duty. If they cannot resolve your concern, please contact our Patient Experience Team on 01932 723553 or email asp-tr.patient.advice@nhs.net. If you remain concerned, the team can also advise upon how to make a formal complaint.

Author: Dr Erin Dawson

Department: Paediatrics

Version: 7

Published: Oct 2021

Review: Oct 2024

Febrile Convulsion

What is a Febrile Convulsion?

A febrile convulsion is a fit, which occurs in some children when they have a high temperature ($>38^{\circ}\text{C}$ by any measurement). Whilst this is frightening to watch, the majority are not serious and do not lead to any permanent damage.

They occur in children aged 6 months to 6 years.

Following a first febrile seizure there is a 30% risk of recurrence. The chances of having a recurrence are higher if there is a family history of febrile convulsions.

What happens during a febrile convulsion?

Usually the child will become floppy, their eyes will roll back, and they will be unresponsive. They will then become stiff with symmetrical rhythmical jerking movements of the upper and lower limbs. This usually lasts less than a minute, although the child may be very sleepy for some time afterwards.

Another condition sometimes associated with a high temperature is a rigor. The child has violent shuddering movements of their body but does not lose consciousness and is not sleepy afterwards.

A child may have been unwell before a fit, but sometimes the fit is the first sign of illness.

What should I do?

A doctor should examine the child to establish the cause of the infection. The most common causes are colds, ear infections etc. Occasionally the fit is a sign of a more serious infection, but this will be detected during the doctor's examination.

The child will usually be admitted to hospital for a first febrile convulsion, if they are under 18 months, or the seizure is atypical.

If your child has a convulsion, you should put them on their side and remove anything which is visible in their mouth which could block the airway.

Excessive clothing should be removed when the fit has stopped, and Paracetamol or Ibuprofen can be given to make your child feel more comfortable when they are awake enough to swallow. Follow the dosage and frequency instructions given on the bottle. Your child should also be encouraged to drink plenty of cool drinks.

If a child has a fit which lasts more than 15 minutes, has another fit immediately after the first, has a fit involving only part of the body, or has any difficulty breathing, or hasn't recovered completely within an hour, then an ambulance should be called and the child taken to hospital.

The treatment involves treating the cause of the temperature. No specific treatment is required for the convulsion itself, unless it does not resolve spontaneously in less than 15 minutes.

No investigations are required following an uncomplicated febrile convulsion.

Having a febrile convulsion is not a predictor of having epilepsy in later life, but a very small proportion of children (1 in 100) will develop epilepsy. A child is more likely to develop epilepsy if there is a family history in first degree relatives.

Having a temperature is a normal reaction to having an infection, and will not harm a child. Giving Paracetamol or Ibuprofen will make the child more comfortable by reducing the temperature, but there is no evidence to suggest that these medicines will prevent a febrile convulsion, therefore they should not be given for this purpose alone.

Further Information

National Institute of Clinical Excellence (NICE) Guideline 2018
Feverish Illness in Children: assessment and initial management
in children younger than 5 years.

The following websites may also be of interest:

www.cks.library.nhs.uk

www.patient.co.uk