



Seizures in children

A seizure is like a short-circuit in the brain. Information in nerves in the brain gets mixed up. There are many forms of seizures.



SIGNS & SYMPTOMS

General Seizure

This affects the whole brain. A convulsion happens with this kind. These are signs of a convulsion.

- The neck muscles or all the body muscles get stiff.
- The arms or legs jerk around.
- The eyes roll up and back in the head.
- The child falls down.
- The child blacks out.
- Wets or soils clothes.

Absence Seizure

A convulsion does not happen with this kind of seizure. Signs of this kind of seizure:

- Stares into space. It looks like the child is not paying attention.
- Smacks their lips.
- The child may blink over-and-over.

CAUSES

High fevers cause most seizures in children ages 6 months to 5 years old. This happens when the body's own temperature control isn't working right yet.

Sicknesses that make a child's temperature go up fast can bring on seizures. These include:

- Epilepsy
- Poisons
- Infections that cause a fever
- Drugs
- Reye's Syndrome
- Snakebites
- Some vaccinations

Most seizures last from 1 to 5 minutes. Short seizures don't cause problems unless the child stops breathing and turns blue. A seizure that lasts longer than 5 minutes can be a sign of a big problem. Let your child's doctor know if your child has any kind of seizure.

PREVENT FEVER

SEIZURES

Try to bring your child's fever down fast:

- Dress your child in light, loose clothes or take off most of his or her clothes.
- Ask your doctor about fever-lowering suppositories.
- Put washcloths rinsed in lukewarm (not cold) water on your child's forehead and neck. Don't use rubbing alcohol.
- Give your child acetaminophen or ibuprofen. Make sure you give the right kind and dose for his or her weight. Do this if the fever gets above 103°F. (**Note:** Do not give aspirin. Aspirin and other medicines that have salicylates have been linked to Reye's Syndrome.)

Keep trying to bring the fever down until it is 101°F or less.



TRIAGE QUESTIONS

Has the child stopped breathing?

NO
↓

YES → **GET EMERGENCY MEDICAL CARE**
(Note: Call 9-1-1 or your local rescue squad!
Follow advice given.)

Does the seizure last more than 5 minutes?

NO
↓

YES → **GET EMERGENCY MEDICAL CARE**

Did the seizure come with any of these things?

- A head injury
- A heat stroke
- Electric shock
- Poisoning

NO
↓

YES → **GET EMERGENCY MEDICAL CARE**

Did any of these things happen with the seizure?

- Vomiting
- A stiff neck
- Extreme sleepiness

NO
↓

YES → **GET EMERGENCY MEDICAL CARE**

Is this your child's first seizure? Or is your child younger than 6 months old or older than 5 years old?

NO
↓

YES → **GET EMERGENCY MEDICAL CARE**

Did your child have another seizure within 24 hours?

NO
↓

YES → **GET EMERGENCY MEDICAL CARE**

USE SELF-CARE



SELF-CARE

Don't panic! A fever seizure will stop by itself in a few minutes. The two things you can do are:

- Try to keep your child from getting hurt during the seizure.
- Lower their fever.

Follow these tips DURING the seizure:

- Protect your child from falling and hitting their head. (Watch out for tables and sharp things.)
- Make sure your child can breathe:
 - Roll the child on his or her side so spit can drain from the mouth.
 - Gently pull on the jaw and bend the neck back. (This opens up the throat.)
- Don't put anything in your child's mouth. Children hardly ever bite their tongues during a fever seizure.
- Don't give your child any medicine, food, or drink by mouth.

Follow these tips AFTER the seizure:

- If the seizure was from a fever, start lowering the fever. Sponge your child's body with lukewarm water. Don't use rubbing alcohol. Don't put the child in a bathtub. Don't use an ice pack. It drops the temperature too fast.
- Your child will probably be sleepy after the seizure. He or she may not remember anything. This is O.K.
- Dress the child in light, loose clothes. Put him or her to sleep in a cool room.
- Let your child's doctor know about the seizure.