

Febrile convulsions

What are febrile convulsions?

A febrile convulsion is a convulsion/seizure that may be caused by an acute febrile (fever) illness. Your child may become unconscious and show jerking/shaking movements throughout the convulsion. They will regain consciousness shortly after the seizure. There is nothing you can do to stop the convulsion. The most important thing to do is to stay calm.

Febrile convulsions are not harmful to your child and do not cause brain damage. They are, however, quite upsetting for parents to witness.

What you should do if your child is having a febrile convulsion

- Stay with your child and ensure they are safe
- Place the child on a soft surface on their back or side
- Do not restrain your child
- Do not put anything into their mouth
- Remove hard/sharp objects from nearby your child
- Do not put your child in a bath (to lower their temperature) during the seizure as this is dangerous
- Carefully and concisely watch and document the movements, duration and recovery from the seizure

Consider calling an ambulance (000) if:

- The convulsion lasts more than five minutes
- Your child has not completely recovered within one hour
- Your child appears very unwell following the seizure

Key points to remember

- One in 30 children have a febrile convulsion, usually between the ages of six months and six years
- Nothing can be done to prevent the convulsion from occurring – remain calm and try not to panic
- Most children with febrile convulsions only ever have one fit. However, some children may have one or more seizures during a fever-related illness. There is no increased risk of epilepsy in children who have a febrile convulsion.

Following a convulsion

Your child may have a decreased appetite but it will return to normal. Encourage them to have regular fluids.

Your child may be less active and a bit irritable, however they will soon return to normal

Medications

Minimal pain is experienced following a convulsion. Paracetamol and ibuprofen should only be given if your child has a fever **and** is unsettled or irritable. If your child has a fever but is happy and playing, these medications do not need to be administered. A fever is the body's natural defence mechanism for treating an infection. These medications will not reduce the risk of further febrile convulsions.

If hospitalised

Admission

The admission process is an opportunity to discuss your child's hospital stay and any special needs they may have while in hospital or for going home.

Visiting hours

The Cabrini Paediatric Ward does not have set visiting hours.

Discharge

Your child will be discharged when your doctor is happy with their progress and condition and you are confident with caring for them at home.

Please report to the reception desk in the foyer of the hospital before leaving to finalise any administrative paperwork.

Care at home

- It is important for your child to rest at home after leaving hospital. Breathing is more difficult when your child is upset.
- Give your child smaller, yet more frequent feeds (breastfeed/formula/water). This lessens the chance of your child tiring and reduces the risk of dehydration.
- Keep your child away from other babies in the first few days of the illness as bronchiolitis is infectious
- Ensure your child remains in a smoke-free environment to assist with their breathing and recovery

Follow-up

Please contact your doctor's rooms to organise a follow-up appointment.

When to contact your doctor

- Any ongoing seizures
- Persistent temperature of 38.5°C or higher

Questions

If you have any questions or concerns, please don't hesitate to contact the Ward using the phone number below.

Cabrini Malvern Paediatric Ward
183 Wattletree Road, Malvern VIC 3144
03 9508 1378

Cabrini Brighton Paediatric Ward
243 New Street, Brighton VIC 3186
03 9508 5690

