

## All you need to know about ... Febrile Convulsions

### What is a febrile convulsion?

A febrile convulsion is a seizure that occurs in response to a high fever in children aged 6 months to 6 years. It is a very common condition affecting approximately 3% of all children in that age group.

A febrile convulsion will often occur without warning. The child may become stiff or floppy. They become unconscious or unaware of their surroundings. They do not respond to stimulation. They may have generalized twitching or jerking movements. They may appear to have some trouble breathing. A febrile convulsion will usually last less than 5 minutes. It may be followed by a period of drowsiness.

**Children who have had febrile convulsions do not have any evidence of "brain damage" and do not have any increased risk of developing epilepsy when compared with other children.**

### What should I do if my child has a febrile convulsion?

- \* DON'T PANIC (studies show that ALL parents panic when witnessing a seizure)
- \* note the time the seizure starts
- \* place the child in a safe environment
  - on the floor lying on their side
  - move all toys/objects out of the way
  - don't leave the child on a bed/chair (they may fall off)
  - don't put the child in a bath (they may drown)
- \* DO NOT attempt to clear the child's mouth
- \* call an ambulance
  - the fit will usually have stopped by the time they arrive
  - the child should be assessed as to the cause of the fever
- \* always seek medical advice for recurrent seizures or persistent high fevers

### Can I prevent febrile convulsions?

Medications such as paracetamol can be used to reduce fever but this may not prevent the seizure from occurring. Paracetamol should not be given regularly in the absence of fever.