

Caring for a Child During and After a Seizure Associated with Fever



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What is a seizure?

A seizure is like an electrical short in the brain. Seizures coming from high fevers are quite common in children under age five (3 or 4% of children have such a seizure before they turn five). Half of the children who have one such seizure never have another. Seizures that last less than 30 minutes do not cause any brain injury. Nearly all children outgrow the tendency to seizure with a high fever by five years of age.

What should I do?

- Keep calm. Most seizures last less than five minutes and will stop on their own.
- If a seizure lasts longer than five minutes, call for an ambulance to bring the child directly to the Emergency Department.
- Put your child on his/her side or stomach so that mucus or vomit can roll out of the mouth (the child might otherwise choke).
- Loosen the child's clothing. Remove hard objects near the child so that the child will not hurt his/her head.
- Note what type of movement the child makes and how long the seizure lasts so that you can tell the doctor.
- If the child's body is hot when the seizure is over, undress the child and keep him cool.

- Allow the child to rest after a seizure. Most children will feel tired.
- Your child should be seen by a doctor after a seizure unless your doctor tells you it is not necessary. There may be a serious problem causing the fever which can be treated.

What should I avoid?

- Do not put anything between the child's teeth or into the mouth.
- Do not try to hold the child or stop the movements.
- Do not give your child anything to swallow during the seizure.
- Do not put the child in a bath to stop the seizures.

At Children's & Women's Health Centre of British Columbia we believe parents are partners on the health care team. We want you to be as informed as possible. This brochure will answer some of your questions. Please ask about things you do not understand and share your concerns.

If you have any questions, please call:
604-875-2345, local 7261