

## What to do for Fever in Children

This fact sheet provides information for parents and caregivers about what to do when a child has a fever.

### If Your Child Has a Fever:

- Take off heavy clothing and blankets.
- Dress the child in lightweight clothing and keep the room temperature at 20°C.
- Give lukewarm sponge or tub baths. Avoid cool baths and never use alcohol rubs to bring down a fever.
- Offer cool fluids frequently when the child is awake.
- Give acetaminophen or ibuprofen for fever and muscle pain in the dose recommended on the package (unless your doctor says otherwise). **DO NOT GIVE ASPIRIN.** Children under 18 should not take acetylsalicylic acid (ASA) or products containing ASA. Your pharmacist can provide advice on appropriate over-the-counter medications for treating fever.
- Allow the child to rest and stay at home
- if possible for 6 days or more, so the virus isn't spread to other children.
- Teach the child to cover his or her mouth and nose with a tissue when coughing or sneezing and then to throw the tissue away.
- Wash your hands often with soap and warm water or an alcohol-based hand sanitizer and teach your child to do so after wiping the nose.
- If you don't have a tissue, cough or sneeze into your upper arm, not into your hands, and teach your child to do the same.
- Don't share eating utensils (e.g., cups or straws), toothbrushes or towels with your child.
- See *How to Take a Temperature*.

### What are Fever Seizures?

A fever seizure is a convulsion (a fit) in a child caused by a rapid rise of body temperature to over 39°C (102.2°F). Most seizures occur within the first day of the child becoming sick and not always when the fever is the highest. Sometimes the seizure is the first sign of a fever in an infant or child.

### Signs of a Fever Seizure

Your child may:

- Experience sudden stiffness of the muscles of the face, arms, or legs on both sides of the body.
- Begin to have jerky movements.
- Fall if standing.
- Pass urine.
- Stop breathing and may begin to turn blue.
- Not respond to voice or touch.
- Cry or moan.

A simple fever seizure will stop by itself with a few seconds to 5 minutes. It is followed by a brief period where the child is sleepy or confused. A complex fever seizure lasts longer than 15 minutes, occurs unevenly affecting one part of the body more than the rest, or happens again during the same illness.

### **If Your Child Has a Fever Seizure**

- Stay calm.
- Leave your child on the floor (you may want to slip a blanket under the child if the floor is hard).
- Loosen tight clothing, especially around the neck.
- Move the child only if he or she is in a dangerous location.
- Turn the child on his or her side or stomach to protect the head and to prevent the child from choking if he or she throws up.
- Don't hold your child down.
- Don't force anything into the mouth as this increases the risk of injury.
- Observe the child closely and time the fever seizure so you can tell the doctor what happened.

### **When to Seek Medical Attention**

- If the child recovers on his/her own, call your doctor or Telehealth for advice.
- Take your child to see a doctor as soon as possible after the first fever seizure.
- If the seizure lasts longer than 5 minutes, call 911 and have an ambulance take your child to the hospital.
- If your child has repeated seizures during the same illness or if this looks like a new type of seizure for your child, take the child to see a doctor.

### **Managing Further Fever Seizures**

If your child has a history of fever seizures and has a fever:

- Give your child acetaminophen at the first sign of fever.
- Sponge or bathe your child in lukewarm water; you may want to apply cool washcloths to the forehead and neck.
- Offer your child cool drinks.

### **For more information:**

Call Telehealth

- 1-866-797-0000;
- TTY: 1-866-797-0007

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