

# **First seizure in children or young people**



# **Introduction**

You have been given this leaflet because your child has had a suspected seizure while their temperature was normal.

Sometimes young children can experience convulsions (seizures) as a result of an uncontrolled high temperature, these are called febrile convulsions.

## **What is a seizure?**

A seizure can be epileptic or non-epileptic.

- An epileptic seizure is caused by a disturbance of electrical activity in the brain. There are different types of epileptic seizures
- Non-epileptic seizures may look epileptic but do not involve any abnormal brain activity. These may be 'faints' or 'funny turns'

## **Does my child have epilepsy?**

A single seizure does not mean that your child has epilepsy. This may be the only seizure that your child ever has; about 1 in 20 people have a one-off seizure some time in their life.

There may be no clear reason why your child has had this event. However, if your child has more seizures, they may need further investigations.

# What to do if your child has a seizure

## Do:

- protect your child from injury (remove harmful objects from nearby) especially their head
- roll your child on to their side (the recovery position) to help them breathe (see Figure 1). You may need to support them in this position until the jerking has stopped
- time how long the jerking movements last
- stay with your child until they are fully recovered
- be calm and reassuring



Figure 1: Recovery position

## Do not:

- restrain your child's movements
- put anything in their mouth
- try to move them unless they are in danger
- give them anything to eat or drink until they are fully recovered
- attempt to bring them round

## **Call for an ambulance if:**

- you know it is your child's first seizure
- the jerking continues for more than 5 minutes
- they have one seizure after another without regaining consciousness between seizures
- they are injured during the seizure
- you believe they need urgent medical attention

## **Keeping my child safe**

It is important that you notify adults who are responsible for your child such as family, friends, school, nursery or childminder and club leaders (for example, cubs, brownies, football). This will allow them to put a plan in place should your child have another seizure. Most organisations will be familiar with managing this type of medical event.

It is important to let your child take part in all their normal activities. However, they will need to be supervised during any activity that involves water, heights, roads or sources of heat. This includes activities such as bath time, riding their bike, playing in a playground and cooking.

Computer usage should be limited to half hourly episodes with at least a 15 minute break in between.

If you are concerned about your child having a seizure at night, it is advisable to leave the bedroom door open so that you will be alerted if they make a strange noise. If you need more reassurance, putting a baby listening monitor in the bedroom may be helpful.

## **Follow up**

Your child will be seen by a paediatrician at the hospital. An appointment will be sent to you in the post. If your child has another seizure before the appointment, please follow the advice in this leaflet. If possible, take a video of the event and seek medical attention.

## **Videotaping of seizures**

If, during the seizure, it is safe for you to take a video this would be very helpful to the paediatrician. Try to capture as much of the event as possible ensuring the room is well lit and removing any coverings.

If you are unable to video record the event, providing an accurate description will be useful.

## **Contact information**

### **NHS 111**

Tel: 111

## **Further information**

Further information on seizures and epilepsy can be found at the following website:

### **NHS Choices**

Website: <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/what-to-do-if-someone-has-a-seizure-fit/>



## Shared Decision Making

If you are asked to make a choice, you may have lots of questions that you want to ask. You may also want to talk over your options with your family or friends. It can help to write a list of the questions you want answered and take it to your appointment.

### Ask 3 Questions

To begin with, try to make sure you get the answers to three key questions if you asked to make a choice about your healthcare.

1. What are my options?
2. What are the pros and cons of each option for me?
3. How do I get support to help me make a decision that is right for me?



These resources have been adapted with kind permission from the MAGIC Programme, supported by the Health Foundation.

\***Ask 3 Questions** is based on Shepherd HL, et al. Three questions that patients can ask to improve the quality of information physicians give about treatment options: A cross-over trial.

Patient Education and Counselling, 2011;84: 379-85



<https://aqua.nhs.uk/resources/shared-decision-making-case-studies/>



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