

FITS IN CHILDREN

What is a fit?

A fit is a disturbance of electrical activity in the brain. Fits may also be called seizures or convulsions. There are different types of fit. Some will cause the person to become unconscious and stiff and to have jerking movements of the arms and legs, these are called generalised fits. Some will only cause a part of the body to move and sometimes the person may be “absent” or unresponsive without any abnormal movements. Watching your child have a fit is a very frightening experience but fits are not as serious as they look.

What causes a fit?

The most common cause of fits in children between the age of 6 months and 6 years is a high temperature. 1 in 30 children will have had a febrile fit by the time they are 5 years old. Fits without fever are less common but many children who have a fit without fever never have a second one and a cause is never found.

Is it epilepsy?

A single fit is never diagnosed as epilepsy, and fits with fever are not epilepsy either. If your child has more than one fit without fever then further investigations may be needed.

Will it happen again?

If a child has one fit with fever it is relatively common for it to happen again. However, most children grow out of febrile fits by the age of 5 and the risk of having another gets rapidly less after the age of 3 years.

What should I do if it happens again?

If your child has a fit where they are unconscious and jerking:

Do: Note the time

- Move anything that might cause injury
- Put something soft under their head
- Turn them on their side if possible
- Stay with them

Don't: Move the child unless in danger

- Restrict their movements
- Place anything in the mouth
- Give anything by mouth until fully recovered

Call an ambulance if:

You are frightened or need help

The fit lasts more than 5 minutes

The child is injured, or you are concerned about their breathing

If you have not called an ambulance you should contact your doctor for advice after the fit has stopped.

Who needs to know about this?

It is a good idea to let other people know that your child has had a “first fit”, e.g. family, friends, school/playgroup, nursery or childminder. Let them know the simple first aid measures to take if it happens again.

Will my child be safe?

It is important to let your child take part in all their normal activities. However, you should take extra care when thinking about bathing, swimming, cycling, climbing and cooking.

Is there anything else I can do?

If your child has had a fit with fever you can try to avoid them becoming too hot if they become unwell.

Take off most of their clothes down to vest and pants/nappy and make sure the room they are in is not too hot. Give them plenty of cool drinks and consider giving paracetamol, especially if they are distressed by their fever.

Sponging a child down or putting them into a cold bath is not recommended.

Patient Experience

We know that being admitted to hospital can be a difficult and unsettling time for you and your loved ones. If you have any questions or concerns, please do speak with a member of staff on the ward or in the relevant department who will do their best to answer your questions and reassure you.

Feedback

Feedback is really important and useful to us – it can tell us where we are working well and where improvements can be made. There are lots of ways you can share your experience with us including completing our Friends and Family Test – cards are available and can be posted on all wards, departments and clinics at our hospitals. We value your comments and feedback and thank you for taking the time to share this with us.

Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS)

If you have any concerns or questions about your care, we advise you to talk with the nurse in charge or the department manager in the first instance as they are best placed to answer any questions or resolve concerns quickly. If the relevant member of staff is unable to help resolve your concern, you can contact the PALS Team. We offer informal help, advice or support about any aspect of hospital services & experiences.

Our PALS team will liaise with the various departments in our hospitals on your behalf, if you feel unable to do so, to resolve your problems and where appropriate refer to outside help.

If you are still unhappy you can contact the Complaints Department, who can investigate your concerns. You can make a complaint orally, electronically or in writing and we can advise and guide you through the complaints procedure.

How to contact PALS:

Telephone Patient Services: 0300 123 1732 or via email at: wah-tr.PALS@nhs.net

Opening times:

The PALS telephone lines are open Monday to Friday from 8.30am to 4.00pm. Please be aware that you may need to leave a voicemail message, but we aim to return your call within one working day. If you are unable to understand this leaflet, please communicate with a member of staff.

For additional medical advice, if your symptoms or condition worsens:

Contact your GP

NHS 111:

Get help with your symptoms, NHS111:

Information to help you manage your health:

Telephone 111

<https://111.nhs.uk/>

www.nhs.uk

In an emergency telephone 999

Emergency Department (A&E)
Alexandra Hospital
Woodrow Drive
Redditch B98 7UB

Tel: 01527 512030

Minor Injury Unit
Kidderminster Hospital
Bewdley Road
Kidderminster DY11 6RJ

Tel: 01562 513039

Emergency Department (A&E)
Worcestershire Royal Hospital
Charles Hastings Way
Worcester WR5 1DD

Tel: 01905 760743