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## Febrile Convulsions

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### Synonyms

[Febrile seizures](#)

### Definition

Febrile convulsions are a common type of seizure seen in children between the ages of 6 months and 6 years. These seizures are triggered by fever, (temperature > 38 °C) but with no evidence of encephalitis or meningitis or prior history of afebrile seizures. Children who have febrile seizures typically have an acute intercurrent viral or bacterial illness such as an ear infection or sinus infection. The seizures are not associated with any systemic metabolic abnormalities such as hypoglycemia.

Febrile seizures are commonly categorized as simple or complex. Simple febrile seizures last

less than 15 min (typically only last a minute or two) and have no focal features. Two or more simple febrile seizures can occur in succession, but the total duration of the seizures should be less than 30 min. A “complex” febrile seizure is one that has focal features, may last more than 15 min, or, when they occur in a series, may last more than 30 min. Rarely, febrile seizures can present with status epilepticus.

Febrile seizures are a type of “provoked seizure.” Seizures can also be “provoked” or “triggered” by head injury or withdrawal from medications.

### See Also

- ▶ [Electroencephalogram \(EEG\)](#)
- ▶ [Epilepsy](#)
- ▶ [Seizures](#)

### References and Reading

Patel, N., Ram, D., Swiderska, N., Mewasingh, L. D., Newton, R. W., & Offringa, M. (2015). Febrile seizures. *BMJ*, *351*:h4240.