Seizures and Fever Treatment

Self-Care at Home

These aspects of home care need to be considered:

- Care of the child during the seizure: During a seizure, only a limited amount of intervention should be undertaken. The main objective is to protect the child’s airway so that breathing is maintained. Protection from other injury is important.
  - Remove objects, such as food and pacifiers, from the mouth.
  - Place the child on his or her side or abdomen.
  - Clear the mouth with a suction bulb (if available) if there is vomiting.
  - Perform a jaw thrust or chin lift maneuver if there is noisy or labored breathing to open the airway.
  - Do not try to restrain the child or try to stop seizure movements.
  - Do not force anything into the child’s mouth. Don’t try to hold the tongue. (It is not necessary to try to prevent the tongue from being swallowed.)

- Control of the fever: Because the seizure is being caused by fever, measures should be taken to lower the body temperature.
  - Remove clothing.
  - Apply cool washcloths to the face and neck.
  - Sponge the rest of the body with cool water (do not immerse a seizing child in the bathtub).
  - Give medication to lower the fever (acetaminophen suppositories in the rectum, if available). Oral medications should not be given until the child is awake.

- Consider the cause of the fever: This is probably best left up to the doctor’s medical evaluation.

Medical Treatment

Should the child come to the hospital with persistent seizure activity (what is termed status epilepticus), the following interventions will be undertaken in the emergency department:
• Emergency treatment is begun to make sure the airway is open and oxygen intake is adequate. A monitor called a pulse oximeter will be used to measure oxygen content in the bloodstream. If additional oxygen is needed, a mask may be used.
• If necessary, the airway may be opened by means of a jaw thrust, chin lift, or a device known as an oral airway. In some cases, it may be necessary to breathe for the child, either with the use of a bag and mask or by placement of a tube in the trachea (windpipe).
• Additional interventions may be needed as a physical examination is performed.
  o Placement of an IV line to obtain blood for testing and to administer medication to stop the seizure
  o A rapid bedside test for blood sugar (glucose) to determine if it is low and if glucose needs to be given through the IV (low blood sugar can cause seizures)
  o Measuring vital signs (temperature, pulse, respiratory rate, and blood pressure)
  o Treatment to lower body temperature, if fever is present


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