TET Spells

**TET spells** occur most often in children who have a congenital heart defect called Tetralogy of Fallot. Children with Tetralogy of Fallot have a combination of heart problems.

- **Ventricular septal defect** (VSD), a hole between the two lower chambers of the heart
- **Pulmonary stenosis** (PS), a narrowing at or beneath the pulmonary valve
- **Overriding aorta**, in which the aorta lies directly above the VSD
- **Thickening of the right ventricular wall**

**Children having a TET spell may have several symptoms:**

- Rapid, deep breathing
- Fainting or loss of consciousness
- Increasing blueness (cyanosis) of the lips, tongue and nail beds
- Irritability or uncontrolled crying

**When does it happen?**

TET spells may occur at any time. They happen most often after the child wakes in the morning or after a nap. They also may occur when the child is crying, feeding or after exercise.

**What causes a TET spell?**

A TET spell occurs when there is a sudden tightening of the narrowed area below the pulmonary valve. The blood that normally goes out of the pulmonary artery to the lungs goes out of the aorta to the body instead. This makes the child look blue or bluer.

**What should I do if this happens?**

- Place your child on his stomach or side, and gently push and hold his knees to his chest.
- Call your child’s cardiologist or pediatrician.

**Children’s Mercy Cardiology office:** (816) 234-3325  
8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Friday

**Emergencies:** Call (816) 234-3000 and ask for the cardiologist on call.

- **If your child’s condition appears life threatening, call 911 or your local emergency medical system.**