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Royal Brompton & Harefield **NHS**
NHS Foundation Trust

Cyanotic spells (blue spells) and your child





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You have been given this leaflet as your child may have a cyanotic spell (blue spell) because of their heart condition. The leaflet does not replace personal advice from a qualified health professional. If you have any questions please ask your doctor or clinical nurse specialist.

Children with some types of heart problems can have what is called a cyanotic spell (a blue spell), which is more frequently seen in children with Tetralogy of Fallot.

What is Tetralogy of Fallot?

Tetralogy of Fallot is caused by a combination of four heart defects that are present at birth:

- Pulmonary valve stenosis – a narrow pulmonary valve (the valve that controls the flow of blood out of the right heart pumping chamber)
- Ventricular septal defect – a hole between the two pumping chambers of the heart (the right and left ventricles)
- Overriding aorta – where the aorta (the body's main artery) is positioned over the right ventricle instead of the left
- Right ventricular hypertrophy – where the muscle of the right ventricle is thickened

What are cyanotic spells (blue spells)?

Cyanosis is when there is a bluish tinge to the skin (especially around the mouth and on the lips) and on fingers and toe nails.

Cyanotic spells (blue spells) are caused when the right ventricular outflow tract (the part of the heart that carries blood out of the right ventricle to the lungs) goes into spasm. This reduces the amount of blood going into the lungs.

Blue spells can occur for no reason, but most commonly happen when a child with Tetralogy of Fallot:

- is crying very hard
- has just woken up

- has just eaten
- has just had a poo (bowel movement) or passed wind
- is dehydrated (hasn't had enough fluids)

During a blue spell, your child's lips, skin and nails will appear bluish, their breathing may seem faster than normal, and they may have a high pitched cry.

Your child may initially become very irritable, then sleepy and unresponsive.

These episodes can be very serious and potentially life threatening, so it is vital to get help from medical professionals immediately. There are also steps you can take to help your child.

What should I do if my child has a blue spell?

If your child has a blue spell, try to remain calm and follow these steps:

- Place your child on their back

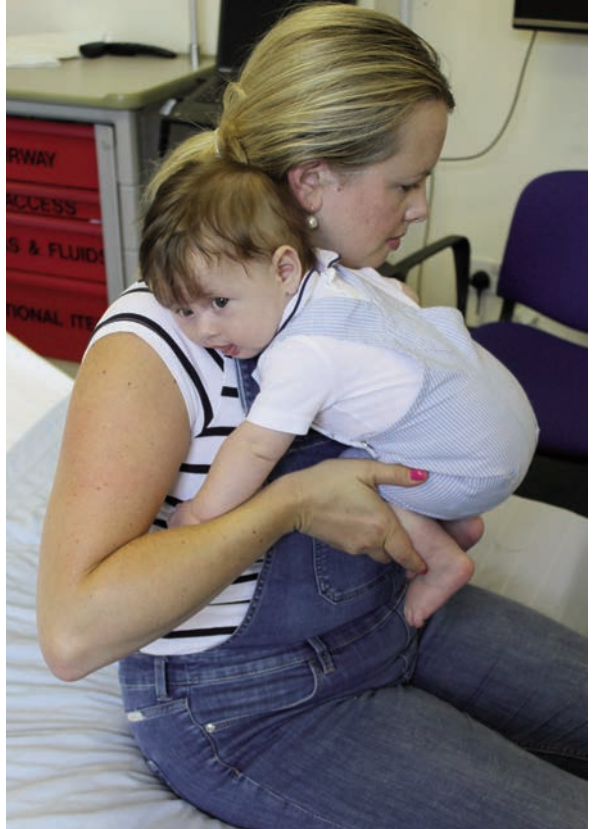


- Bring knees up to touch their chest
- Cuddle and comfort your child

With older children, lie them on their side and bring their knees up to the chest.

This is called the 'knees to chest manoeuvre' and may bring your child out of the blue spell.

If your child has a blue spell, dial 999 and ask for an ambulance. Your child must be taken to the nearest accident and emergency (A&E) department.



Please remember that Royal Brompton and Harefield Hospitals do not have an accident and emergency (A&E) department.

If you have a clinic letter or discharge summary, take this with you to the hospital so that the staff are aware of your child's heart condition.



What should I do after a blue spell?

Once your child has recovered from the blue spell, contact Royal Brompton Hospital and speak to your child's clinical nurse specialist or medical team (see 'How to contact us' on page 6).

Your child may need to start taking a medication called propranolol, which helps to relax the muscle below the pulmonary artery (the blood vessel that carries blood from the heart to the lungs). This medication can help prevent blue spells.

If your child starts having regular blue spells, you need to bring him/her into Royal Brompton Hospital to have a review by their cardiologist. This may involve them recommending that your child has an operation on their heart.

How can I help prevent blue spells?

Children are more likely to have a blue spell if they are dehydrated. Therefore, make sure your child has enough fluids, especially:

- if they have vomiting and diarrhoea – **if this lasts for more than 24 hours, make an appointment with your GP**
- if they get a high temperature
- during hot weather

How to contact us

If your child has a clinical nurse specialist assigned to them, please call their mobile for further advice. Otherwise, call **0330 12 87727** and ask to speak to one of the cardiac clinical nurse specialists.

The clinical nurse specialist team is available Monday to Friday, 9am–5pm. Outside of these hours, contact the paediatric cardiology registrar via the hospital switchboard: **0330 12 88121**.

If you have concerns about any aspect of the service you have received in hospital and feel unable to talk to those people responsible for your care, call the Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) on:

- Royal Brompton Hospital – 020 7349 7715
- Harefield Hospital – 01895 826 572

You can also email pals@rbht.nhs.uk. This is a confidential service.

Royal Brompton Hospital
Sydney Street
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SW3 6NP
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Hill End Road
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UB9 6JH
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Website: www.rbht.nhs.uk

إذا كنت ترغب في الحصول على ترجمة فورية لمضمون هذه الوثيقة إلى اللغة العربية، يرجى منك الاتصال بأحد مستخدمي جناح المصلحة التي يتم فيها استشفائك. أحد موظفينا سيسعى لترتيب إجراءات الترجمة وإتمامها في الوقت المناسب لك.

Brosurteki bilginin Türkçe tercumesi için tedavi görüyor olduğunuz bölüme bas vurunuz. Bölüm personeli tercümenin gerçekleşmesini en kısa zamanda ayarlayacaktır.

