

# Tetralogy of Fallot

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## WHAT IS TETRALOGY OF FALLOT?

**Tetralogy of Fallot is a congenital heart condition. This means that before you were born there was a problem with the development in the structure of your heart. Tetralogy of Fallot refers to a combination of four heart abnormalities:**

1. A narrow pulmonary valve and/or pulmonary artery (pulmonary stenosis).
2. An enlarged right ventricle. Because your right ventricle pumps blood to your lungs (through the pulmonary valve and artery) it has to work very hard to get blood through the narrowing and as a result can become thicker and more muscular (hypertrophied).
3. A large hole – called a ventricular septal defect (VSD) between the two main pumping chambers of your heart (the right and left ventricles).

4. An overriding aorta. The aorta usually comes directly off the left ventricle but in tetralogy of Fallot it is placed towards the right side of your heart and sits over your VSD. This means, before surgery a mixture of oxygen – rich and oxygen – poor blood is pumped into your aorta and around your body. The lower level of oxygen in your blood could make you appear blue at times.

### THINGS TO TALK ABOUT

- Endocarditis
- Physical activity
- Healthy lifestyle
- Pregnancy
- Contraception
- Medicines (including warfarin)

For over 50 years we've pioneered research that's transformed the lives of people living with heart and circulatory conditions. Our work has been central to the discoveries of vital treatments that are changing the fight against heart disease. But so many people still need our help.

From babies born with life-threatening heart problems to the many Mums, Dads and Grandparents who survive a heart attack and endure the daily battles of heart failure.

Join our fight for every heartbeat in the UK. Every pound raised, minute of your time and donation to our shops will help make a difference to people's lives.

## SURGERY

You may have had a shunt operation when you were a baby, or a valvuloplasty using a balloon catheter to widen your pulmonary valve. Or you may have had neither of these and just a single major repair operation.

During your operation, your VSD was closed by sewing a patch over it. Your narrow pulmonary valve was also widened. Narrowing in your pulmonary artery could have been treated with a patch. The operation never makes your heart completely normal.

Most young people will have a good quality of life after having surgery but more surgery may be needed later on. This is because you will have an abnormal pulmonary valve, which does not close properly and can cause leaking. This is called pulmonary regurgitation. Your right ventricle has to work harder than usual, sometimes causing it to get enlarged as the years go by.

Surgery may be needed in teenage or adult life to replace your valve.

Years after surgery, you may develop an abnormal heart rhythm (arrhythmia) which may need treatment. Treatment can be with medication or a catheter procedure.

### ENDOCARDITIS

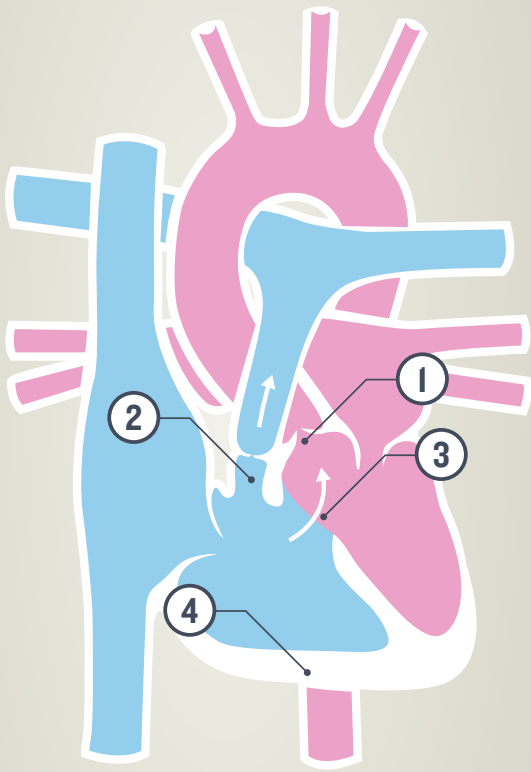
**To reduce your risk of getting endocarditis:**

- Keep your teeth and mouth clean and have regular check-ups with a dentist
- Avoid body piercing and tattooing
- Never inject recreational drugs

# YOUR HEART

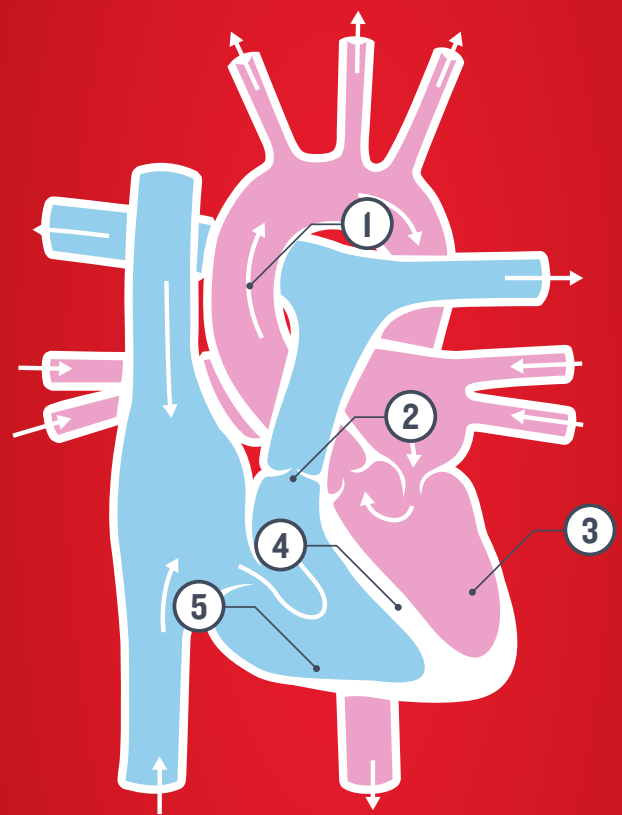
Find out more about your heart:

[yheart.net](http://yheart.net) / [chfed.org.uk](http://chfed.org.uk) / [thesf.org.uk](http://thesf.org.uk)



- ① overriding aorta
- ② narrowed pulmonary valve
- ③ ventricular septal defect
- ④ enlarged right ventricle.

# THE HEART



- ① aorta
- ② pulmonary valve
- ③ left ventricle
- ④ ventricular septum
- ⑤ right ventricle.