

Jimmy Kimmel's Newborn Son Tetralogy of Fallot Script

OSF HealthCare Newsroom

Shelli Dankoff – Media Relations Coordinator

When comedian and late-night talk show host Jimmy Kimmel tearfully explained that his new son was born with a congenital heart defect, it was no laughing matter.

William "Billy" Kimmel was diagnosed with tetralogy of fallot (TOF) with pulmonary atresia after a nurse noticed his skin tone was purple. His medical team quickly determined the baby was not getting enough oxygen.

"The baby will generally be born with lower oxygen levels than a typical baby because they are born with a particular combination of heart defects," explains Dr. Trey Jantzen, Pediatric Cardiologist with OSF HealthCare Children's Hospital of Illinois in Peoria, Illinois. "The first defect will be a large hole between the bottom pumping chambers of the heart and then they have varying degrees of narrowing or stenosis of the valve that goes to the lungs called the pulmonary valve. Pulmonary atresia is the severest end of the spectrum of the narrowing of the pulmonary valve, when the valve doesn't form at all."

While a scary diagnosis for new parents to hear, tetralogy of fallot is one of the most common congenital heart defects.

SOT DR. TREY JANTZEN (Pediatric Cardiologist – OSF HealthCare Children's Hospital of Illinois)

(We do see it on quite a regular basis. We operate on more patients with tetralogy of fallot not only because they require one operation when they are born but they can also require a series of procedures throughout life :16)

Dr. Jantzen adds that there is no reason children born with TOF can't go on to live normally without restrictions to their daily life.

SOT DR. TREY JANTZEN (Pediatric Cardiologist – OSF HealthCare Children's Hospital of Illinois)

(We would never say somebody is totally cured if they have TOF and have to have surgery – and will often require future interventions – but the vast majority of patients with TOF once they have their surgeries and procedures can live a full, productive and normal life. :19)

As the Congenital Heart Clinical Coordinator, Gail Eaton cares for TOF children. Over the course of her nearly 42 years at Children's Hospital of Illinois, which serves the northern half of Illinois, she has cared for hundreds of children born with heart defects. One of her TOF patients, Dylan, is now 24-years-old and works as a nurse in the Pediatric Intensive Care Unit. She attended his wedding and knows it's a comfort for new parents to see young adults like Dylan hit the milestones every family hopes for.

SOT GAIL EATON (Congenital Heart Clinical Coordinator - OSF HealthCare Children's Hospital of Illinois)

(I'm sure his family thought 'is he ever going to make it through kindergarten, will he ever make it to 8th grade, will we see him graduate from high school.' So to be able to live this with these families and see them make all of these milestones is huge. :18)

Eaton has seen amazing advances in the care of children born with congenital heart defects over the years, to the point where many can now receive new valves in the cardiac catheterization lab instead of needing open heart surgery. She also emphasizes the need for a multi-disciplinary team to care for these children, care that will be required the rest of their lives.

SOT GAIL EATON (Congenital Heart Clinical Coordinator - OSF HealthCare Children's Hospital of Illinois)

(You have neonatologists, you have cardiologists, cardiac surgeons, anesthesiologists, perfusionists, nurses play a huge role. You have to have renal back up, you have to have pulmonary back up. There's a lot of other entities come into play. All of these things have to be able to be addressed, so it takes a huge facility with a lot of specials to care for these children. :28)

To learn more about the Congenital Heart Center at OSF HealthCare Children's Hospital of Illinois, visit <http://www.childrenshospitalofillinois.org/services-and-clinics/specialty-services/congenital-heart-center/>