

Your baby does NOT have a disease

People with sickle cell trait have two kinds of hemoglobin in their red blood cells. One kind is the normal adult hemoglobin called hemoglobin A. The other kind is sickle hemoglobin called hemoglobin S. Hemoglobin A is the most common kind of hemoglobin.

Hemoglobin (he-mo-glo-bin) is the red-colored protein in blood. Hemoglobin carries oxygen from the lungs to all parts of the body.

Sickle cell trait is inherited

Babies inherit sickle cell trait from their parents just like eye color or hair color. Your baby inherited hemoglobin A from one parent and hemoglobin S from the other parent. (AS = sickle cell trait.) Your baby was born with sickle cell trait and will always have it.

Sickle cell trait cannot be spread to another person like measles or a cold. Sickle cell trait **will not** change into disease later on.

Your baby with sickle cell trait will never get sickle cell disease.

Babies with sickle cell trait are usually healthy

Sickle cell trait will not affect your baby's chances of having a normal, healthy life. Sickle cell trait **will not** make your baby sick. You should always tell doctors that your baby was tested and has sickle cell **trait**. If your baby ever gets sick, this should help the doctor know sickle cell disease is **not** the problem.

Parents with sickle cell trait can have babies with sickle cell disease

If **both** parents have sickle cell trait, **each** of their babies has a 25 percent chance of having sickle cell disease. You can find out



PARENTS
AS = Sickle cell trait
Both parents have sickle cell trait



BABY
SS = Sickle cell disease

if you or your partner have sickle cell trait by having a blood test called **hemoglobin electrophoresis** (e-lek-tro-for-e-sis). This is the only test that should be used to find out if you carry the sickle cell trait.

Sickle cell trait is not the same as sickle cell disease

People who have sickle cell **disease** have red blood cells that become sickle-shaped when they give up oxygen to the tissues. These cells become trapped in various organs or blood vessels causing pain, discomfort and organ damage. Babies with sickle cell **disease** need treatment with penicillin twice a day to reduce the risk of infections.

More tests for your baby

Talk to your baby's doctor. Your baby might need the hemoglobin electrophoresis test at about one year of age. This test will tell more about your baby's blood.

As your child grows

Tell your child that he/she has sickle cell trait. Help your child understand that sickle cell trait is inherited and that his/her children could have the disease.

Ask your doctor about any new information concerning sickle cell trait. Researchers are investigating rare health problems that have been reported with sickle cell trait. It is important to talk with your child's doctor about any questions you have.

Newborn Screening in Wisconsin

Since October 31, 1988, all babies born in Wisconsin are tested for sickle cell disease through the Newborn Screening Program. Ask your doctor for the results of the newborn screening test for all your children.

For more information on newborn screening

Newborn Screening Program
Division of Public Health
(608) 266-8904

For more information on sickle cell trait

Children's Hospital of Wisconsin
Genetics Center
(414) 266-3347

Sickle Cell Disease
Comprehensive Center
9000 W. Wisconsin Avenue
Milwaukee, WI 53226
(414) 257-1232



WISCONSIN DEPARTMENT
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Sickle Cell Trait

