

Sickle Cell Trait



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 iron-containing part of the red blood cells. 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.

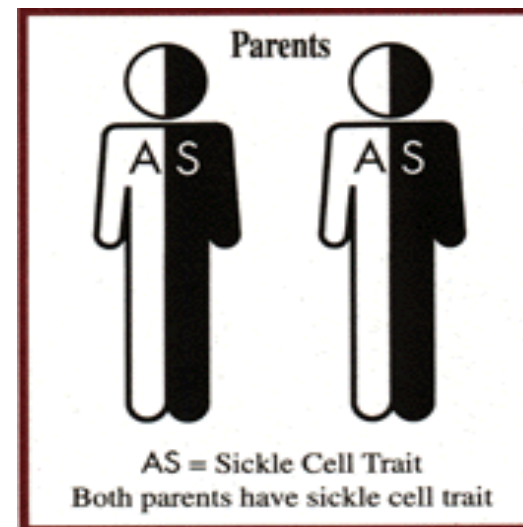
Your baby with sickle cell trait will never get sickle cell disease.

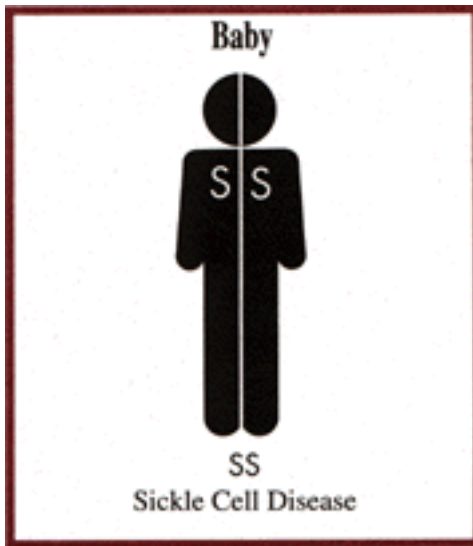
Babies With Sickle Cell Trait Are Usually Healthy

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 every doctor who sees your baby that he/she 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, their babies can have sickle cell disease. *Each* baby has a 25% chance of having sickle cell disease.





You can find out if you 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 your blood carries 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 to understand that sickle cell trait is inherited and that it can be passed on to his/her children.

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

For More Information on Newborn Screening

Newborn Screening Program
1414 East Washington Avenue
Madison, WI 53703-3044
(608) 266-8904

For More Information on Sickle Cell Trait

Genetics Center
Childrens Hospital of Wisconsin
(414) 266-3345

WI Sickle Cell Disease
Comprehensive Center
8739 Watertown Plank Road
P.O. Box 26557
Wauwautosa, WI 53226
(414) 257-1232

Wisconsin Division of Health
Department of Health and Social Services