

TRAIT Result:

Blood Spot Screen Result Notification



FAS - Sickle Cell Trait

What was found on the newborn screen?

The newborn screen that was collected at birth found that your baby has fetal hemoglobin (F), adult hemoglobin (A), and abnormal hemoglobin (S).

What does this mean?

This means your baby likely has sickle cell trait (AS). The fetal hemoglobin goes away as babies get older.

What is sickle cell trait?

Sickle cell trait is not a disease and can never become a disease. Sickle cell trait does not cause health problems. You may have sickle cell trait and not know it. People with sickle cell trait will always have it; you cannot grow out of it.

Sickle cell trait is common and can occur in any race or ethnicity. About 1 out of every 12 African Americans and about 1 out of every 100 Hispanics have sickle cell trait. It is most common in people from West Africa. Sickle cell trait is an inherited condition that affects the hemoglobin in your red blood cells. Hemoglobin is a protein in red blood cells. The job of hemoglobin is to carry oxygen throughout the body. Red blood cells with normal hemoglobin (A) are flexible and doughnut shaped. Red blood cells with abnormal hemoglobin (S) are sickle or half-moon shaped.

More information about trait can be found on our website: www.health.state.mn.us/people/newbornscreening/families/trait.html.

How do you know if your baby actually has sickle cell trait?

A simple blood test called a hemoglobin electrophoresis can tell if your baby has sickle cell trait. This test will likely be performed when your baby is between nine and twelve months of age. Talk with your baby's doctor about plans for testing and any questions you have about it.

Why is it important to know?

When a baby has sickle cell trait, we know that at least one parent has it too. Trait is passed on from parent to child like other genes for eye color and height. If only one parent has trait, it is not a problem. However, if both parents have trait, each pregnancy can result in the child having sickle cell disease. Sickle cell disease is a lifelong illness that can result in serious health problems. Learning about trait is important for your baby AND for you and your partner too.



Resources

Newborn Screening Genetic Counselors
(651) 201-3548
health.newbornscreening@state.mn.us

Sickle Cell Foundation of Minnesota
www.sicklecellmn.org

Sickle Cell Disease Association of America, Inc
www.sicklecelldisease.org