

NEWBORN SCREENING FACT SHEET FOR PARENTS

POSITIVE SCREENING TEST RESULT FOR AN ABNORMAL HEMOGLOBIN

What does a positive screening test result of abnormal hemoglobin mean?

Hemoglobin is the part of the red blood cell that carries oxygen. Sometimes a person makes a different type of hemoglobin. They may also be making the usual type of hemoglobin at the same time. Sometimes these abnormalities can cause problems and sometimes they are harmless. A screening test result that is positive for the presence of an abnormal hemoglobin type means that your baby's blood has a different type of hemoglobin. It does not tell if this is harmful to your baby.

What should a parent do with this test result?

Your baby's doctor will want to get a new blood sample from your baby for a test to help determine the type(s) of hemoglobin that your baby has. Once this information is known, your baby's doctor will help you understand any risks that your baby might face because of this hemoglobin

Once the hemoglobin type is confirmed, make sure to ask your baby's doctor if the medical record includes this information. This should help avoid more testing.

When your child is older, be sure that he/she knows about their hemoglobin type(s) and that it might pass to his or her children.

Why is this test result important to you, the parent?

Many people do not know that they have a different type of hemoglobin. If you have a different type of hemoglobin, you may pass this on to your children. If both parents have an abnormal hemoglobin, they have an increased chance of having a baby with hemoglobin problems.

How can I get more information?

You can obtain more information from your baby's doctor, about abnormal hemoglobins and other specialists who are available.

You might want to consider genetic counseling to discuss testing options and family risks. If you wish to schedule an appointment, call (402) 559-6800 or (800) 656-3937.

Some of the specialists in blood diseases are James Harper, MD at the Nebraska Medical Center (402) 559-7257 and David Gnarra, MD at Omaha Children's Hospital (402) 955-3950. If you live outside of the Omaha/Lincoln areas, other options to see a specialist might be available. Some areas have special clinics and some may have tele-medicine visits available.

