



Sickle Cell Test For Newborns

Q: Why did my baby have this test?

A: All babies born in Connecticut have this test to check for Sickle Cell Trait or Sickle Cell Disease.

Q: What is Hemoglobin?

A: To understand Sickle Cell Trait, it is helpful to understand a little more about our blood. Hemoglobin is a protein found in red blood cells that carries oxygen and gives blood its red color. The way hemoglobin is made in the body depends on the genes a child gets from both parents. Most people have the type of hemoglobin called *hemoglobin A* (also called *normal* or *adult hemoglobin*). However, there are many different types of hemoglobin found in people throughout the world. *Hemoglobin S* is one type; *Hemoglobin C* is another type.

SICKLE CELL TRAIT

Q: What is Sickle Cell Trait?

A: Sickle Cell Trait means that sometimes your red blood cells are round like this:  and sometimes they take on a sickle shape like this: 

Q: Will Sickle Cell Trait make my baby sick?

A: No! Sickle Cell Trait is *not a sickness*. It is good to know about it. But it should *not* cause health problems for your baby.

Q: How do babies get Sickle Cell Trait?

A: If the baby gets a sickle gene from one parent and a non-sickle gene from the other parent, the baby has Sickle Cell Trait. Parents pass the sickle genes on to their children the same way they pass on the genes for skin color or eye color.

SICKLE CELL DISEASE

Q: What is Sickle Cell Disease?

A: A baby with Sickle Cell Disease has too many red blood cells that take on the sickle shape. Children with Sickle Cell Disease will need special medication and medical care all of their lives. Sickle Cell Disease cannot be cured, but it can be treated.

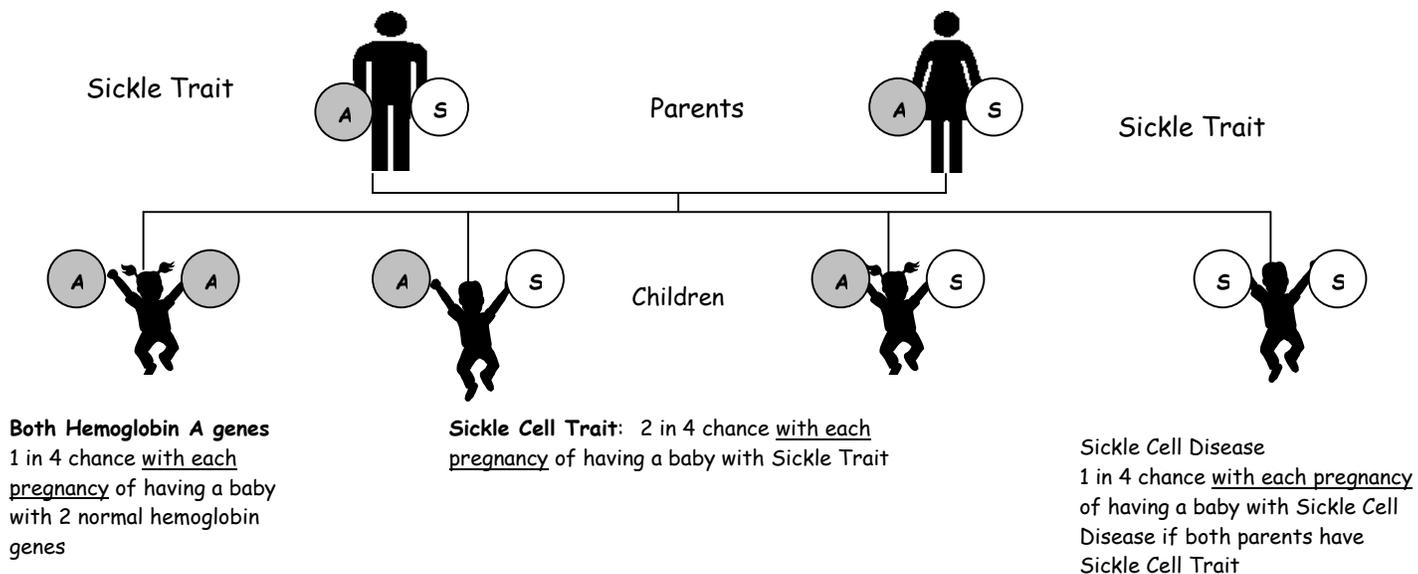
Q: How do babies get Sickle Cell Disease?

A: If both parents pass on the sickle gene to the baby, this causes Sickle Cell disease.

Q: Can Sickle Cell Trait turn into Sickle Cell Disease?

A: *No!* They are different. One cannot turn into the other.

If both parents have Sickle Trait
A = Normal Hemoglobin Gene / S = Sickle Gene



PARENTS

Q: Do all parents have sickle genes?

A: No, sickle genes run in some families and not in others. It started out as a protection against malaria.

Malaria is a disease that is found in Africa, the Caribbean Islands, Greece, Malta, Sardinia, Turkey, Sicily, and Southern Asia. Families who trace their roots to these places might carry the sickle gene.

Q: How can parents know if they have the sickle gene?

A: You have to ask for a *special blood test, called Hemoglobin electrophoresis*. A little blood will be taken from your finger or arm.

Q: How can I get the test?

A: Ask your doctor or health care clinic.

FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT:

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 Sickle Cell Service 860-545-9630

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