

Harlequin ichthyosis is a rare genetic skin disorder. The newborn infant is covered with plates of thick skin that crack and split apart. The thick plates can pull at and distort facial features and can restrict breathing and eating. Harlequin infants need to be cared for in the neonatal intensive care unit immediately. Harlequin ichthyosis is inherited in an autosomal recessive pattern. Harlequin ichthyosis affects males and females in equal numbers. This condition affects approximately one in 500,000 persons or about seven births annually in the United States.