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# Thalassemia

**Also called:** **Cooley's anemia, Mediterranean anemia**

Thalassemias are inherited blood disorders. If you have one, your body makes fewer healthy red blood cells and less hemoglobin. Hemoglobin is a protein that carries oxygen to the body. That leads to **anemia**



[<https://medlineplus.gov/anemia.html>] . Thalassemias occur most often among people of Italian, Greek, Middle Eastern, Southern Asian, and African descent.

Thalassemias can be mild or severe. Some people have no symptoms or mild anemia. The most common severe type in the United States is called Cooley's anemia. It usually appears during the first two years of life. People with it may have severe anemia, slowed growth and delayed puberty, and problems with the spleen, liver, heart, or bones.


Doctors diagnose thalassemias using blood tests. Treatments include blood transfusions and treatment to remove excess iron from the body. If you have mild symptoms or no symptoms, you may not need treatment. In some severe cases, you may need a bone marrow transplant.

*NIH: National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute*


## Start Here

- [About Thalassemia \[https://www.cdc.gov/thalassemia/about/\]](https://www.cdc.gov/thalassemia/about/) (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention)
- [About Thalassemia \[https://www.genome.gov/Genetic-Disorders/Thalassemia\]](https://www.genome.gov/Genetic-Disorders/Thalassemia)  (National Human Genome Research Institute)
- [Thalassemia \[https://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/thalassemia/symptoms-causes/syc-20354995?p=1\]](https://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/thalassemia/symptoms-causes/syc-20354995?p=1)  
(Mayo Foundation for Medical Education and Research)  
Also in Spanish [<https://www.mayoclinic.org/es/diseases-conditions/thalassemia/symptoms-causes/syc-20354995?p=1>]
- [What Is Thalassemia? \[https://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/health/thalassemia\]](https://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/health/thalassemia)  (National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute)

## Diagnosis and Tests

- [Hemoglobin Electrophoresis \[https://medlineplus.gov/lab-tests/hemoglobin-electrophoresis/\]](https://medlineplus.gov/lab-tests/hemoglobin-electrophoresis/)  (National Library of Medicine)  
Also in Spanish [<https://medlineplus.gov/spanish/pruebas-de-laboratorio/electroforesis-de-hemoglobina/>]

## Treatments and Therapies

- [Iron Chelation \[https://www.aamds.org/treatment/iron-chelation\]](https://www.aamds.org/treatment/iron-chelation) (Aplastic Anemia and MDS International Foundation)
- [Treatment of Thalassemia \[https://www.cdc.gov/thalassemia/treatment/\]](https://www.cdc.gov/thalassemia/treatment/) (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention)
- [Treatments for Blood Disorders \[https://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/health/blood-bone-marrow-treatments\]](https://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/health/blood-bone-marrow-treatments)  
 (National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute)  
Also in Spanish [<https://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/es/salud/sangre-y-medula-osea-tratamientos>]

## Living With




- [Living with Thalassemia \[https://www.cdc.gov/thalassemia/living-with/\]](https://www.cdc.gov/thalassemia/living-with/) (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention)

Real Stories from People Living with Thalassemia [<https://www.cdc.gov/thalassemia/stories/>] (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention)



## Specifics

- What is Thalassemia [<https://thalassemia.org/What-is-Thalassemia>] (Cooley's Anemia Foundation)

## Genetics

- Alpha thalassemia X-linked intellectual disability syndrome: MedlinePlus Genetics [<https://medlineplus.gov/genetics/condition/alpha-thalassemia-x-linked-intellectual-disability-syndrome>]  (National Library of Medicine)
- Alpha thalassemia: MedlinePlus Genetics [<https://medlineplus.gov/genetics/condition/alpha-thalassemia>]  (National Library of Medicine)
- Beta thalassemia: MedlinePlus Genetics [<https://medlineplus.gov/genetics/condition/beta-thalassemia>]  (National Library of Medicine)

## Clinical Trials


- ClinicalTrials.gov: beta-Thalassemia [<https://clinicaltrials.gov/search?cond=%22beta-Thalassemia%22&aggFilters=status:not%20rec>]  (National Institutes of Health)
- ClinicalTrials.gov: Thalassemia [<https://clinicaltrials.gov/search?cond=%22Thalassemia%22&aggFilters=status:not%20rec>]  (National Institutes of Health)

## Journal Articles

References and abstracts from MEDLINE/PubMed (National Library of Medicine)

- Article: Multiclass classification of thalassemia types using complete blood count and HPLC... [<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/40691682>]
- Article: Utilizing loop-mediated isothermal amplification (LAMP) for detecting hemoglobin Constant Spring and... [<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/40642331>]
- Article: Thalassemia in Bangladesh: progress, challenges, and a strategic blueprint for prevention. [<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/40640823>]
- Thalassemia -- see more articles [<https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/?term=%22Thalassemia%22%5Bmajr%3Anoexp%5D+AND+humans%5Bmh%5D+AND+english%5Bla%5D+AND+%22last+1+Year%22+%5Bedat%5D+NOT+%28letter%5Bpt%5D+OR+case+reports%5Bpt%5D+OR+editorial%5Bpt%5D+OR+comment%5Bpt%5D%29+AND+free+full+text%5Bsb%5D+>]

## Find an Expert

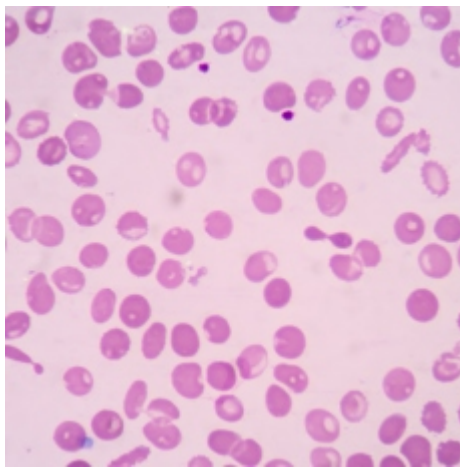
- National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute [<https://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/>] 
- Thalassemia Care Centers [<https://www.cdc.gov/thalassemia/treatment/treatment-centers.html>] (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention)

## Children

- Alpha Thalassemia (For Parents) [<https://kidshealth.org/en/parents/thalassemias.html>] (Nemours Foundation)  
Also in Spanish [<https://kidshealth.org/es/parents/thalassemias.html>]
- Beta Thalassemia (For Parents) [<https://kidshealth.org/en/parents/beta-thalassemia.html>] (Nemours Foundation)  
Also in Spanish [<https://kidshealth.org/es/parents/beta-thalassemia.html>]

## Patient Handouts

- Thalassemia [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/000587.htm>] (Medical Encyclopedia)  
Also in Spanish [<https://medlineplus.gov/spanish/ency/article/000587.htm>]



## MEDICAL ENCYCLOPEDIA

Hemoglobinuria test [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/003363.htm>]

Osmotic fragility test [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/003641.htm>]

Thalassemia [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/000587.htm>]

## Related Health Topics

Anemia [<https://medlineplus.gov/anemia.html>]

## National Institutes of Health

The primary NIH organization for research on *Thalassemia* is the National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute [<http://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/>]

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