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## Hemoglobin C disease

Hemoglobin C disease is a blood disorder passed down through families. It leads to a type of anemia, which occurs when red blood cells break down earlier than normal.

### Causes

Hemoglobin C is an abnormal type of hemoglobin, the protein in red blood cells that carries oxygen. It is a type of hemoglobinopathy. The disease is caused by a problem with a gene called beta globin.

The disease most often occurs in African Americans. You are more likely to have hemoglobin C disease if someone in your family has had it.

### Symptoms

Most people do not have symptoms. In some cases, jaundice may occur. Some people may develop gallstones that need to be treated.

### Exams and Tests

A physical exam may show an enlarged spleen.

Tests that may be done include:

- Complete blood count
- Hemoglobin electrophoresis
- Peripheral blood smear
- Blood hemoglobin

### Treatment

In most cases, no treatment is needed. Folic acid supplements may help your body produce normal red blood cells and improve the symptoms of the anemia.

### Outlook (Prognosis)

People with hemoglobin C disease can expect to lead a normal life.

# Possible Complications

Complications may include:

- Anemia
- Gallbladder disease
- Enlargement of the spleen

## When to Contact a Medical Professional

Contact your health care provider if you have symptoms of hemoglobin C disease.

## Prevention

You may want to seek genetic counseling if you are at high risk for the condition and are considering having a baby.

## Alternative Names

Clinical hemoglobin C

## References

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