Trait for Unidentified Hemoglobin Fact Sheet

What is hemoglobin?

Hemoglobin is the substance in blood which carries oxygen to all parts of the body.

Where does hemoglobin come from?

Your hemoglobin type is inherited through family genes. The color of your hair, the color of your eyes, your body build, and your hemoglobin type are all examples of things about you that are determined by genes. A person's hemoglobin type depends on the genes he or she received from both their mother and father.

Hemoglobin A (normal adult hemoglobin) is the most common type. But many hundreds of different types of hemoglobin have now been identified.

What does a trait for an unidentified hemoglobin mean?

The Department of Health screens all newborns for sickle cell disease. In the course of that screening, other hemoglobins are sometimes found. In addition to sickle hemoglobin, the screening identifies a few of the more common hemoglobin variants. These include hemoglobin C, Hemoglobin E, hemoglobin D, and hemoglobin G. But sometimes, as in your child's case, other hemoglobins are found which the screening program cannot identify.

Having a trait for an unknown hemoglobin is not a disease. It will not turn into a disease. Your child should have no health problems related to the trait and will require no special medical care.

If you need additional information, talk to your doctor, or call the Newborn Screening Program at the number provided in your letter.

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