You are a beta thalassaemia carrier

Easy Read version
This leaflet has quite a lot of difficult words and ideas in it
We have made this leaflet as accessible as possible. There are still some difficult ideas in it. You might need to ask a friend, family member, carer or health professional to help you read this booklet.

If you see the symbol on the left it means there is a difficult medical word. This is a word that you might hear when you visit your doctor. You might also see it on letters and leaflets you get from your doctor.

Leaflets with the green thumbs up symbol on the cover have a small number of difficult words and ideas in them.

Leaflets with the orange thumbs up symbol on the cover have a few difficult words and ideas in them.

Leaflets with the red thumbs down symbol on the cover have quite a lot of difficult words and ideas in them.
You had a blood test recently. The test result shows that you are healthy – there is no need to worry about being unwell.

**Carrier.** This is what we call a person who can give a disease to other people but doesn’t get ill from it themselves.

But the result shows that you are a **carrier** of a blood disease called beta thalassaemia.

This leaflet gives you information about being a carrier, and what this means for you and your family.

**What is a beta thalassaemia carrier?**

Beta thalassaemia is a blood disease which means a person’s blood can’t keep their body healthy.

One of your parents passed this on to you. You do not have the disease yourself so you are healthy. But you could pass it on to your children. This is called being a carrier.

**What does this result mean for me?**

Being a carrier will not generally cause you any health problems.

The reason why you need to understand about being a carrier is because you could pass the disease on to your children.
What could my result mean for my children?

Because you are a carrier, your children could be carriers too. They might get a serious health condition.

The chances of you passing along the blood disease to your children are different depending on the type of blood your partner has.

Your partner will only know they are a carrier if they have had a special blood test. We will offer fathers-to-be this test when screening shows the mother is a carrier. But both men and women can ask for a test at any time from their GP.

What kind of disease could I pass on to my child?

There are a number of blood diseases. Some are more serious than others.

The type of disease you could pass on to your child will depend on what types of blood both parents have.

If your partner is also a carrier, there is a chance that you could pass on a blood disease to your children. Some of these diseases are serious. If the blood test shows your partner is a carrier, your doctor will tell you more about this.
What does my result mean for other people in my family?

If you are a carrier then other members of your family could be carriers too.

It is a good idea to talk to your parents, brothers, sisters, uncles, aunts and cousins and ask them to get a test before they start a family or have any more children. Showing them this leaflet may help.

Common questions

Why didn’t I know about this? I have had blood tests before.

Blood tests don’t always show that you are a carrier. More tests are needed to confirm this.

What’s the difference between being a carrier and having a disease?

Carriers are generally well and are only spotted after special tests are done. People with a disease are often ill and need treatment.

As a carrier could I get a blood disease?

No, you cannot get a blood disease. But you will always be a carrier.
**Infectious.** This is a word for a disease or condition that one person can catch from another.

**Is being a carrier infectious?**

No, you can only be a carrier if you have it passed to you from one of your parents. You can also pass being a carrier to any children you have.

**Does being a carrier mean I can’t have children?**

No, you can still have children.

**What should I do now?**

- Let your family doctor (GP) know that you are a carrier.
- If you are expecting a baby or planning to have a baby, your partner should get tested to see if they are a carrier.
- If you already have adult children, they might want to be tested to see if they are also carriers.
- It is a good idea to talk to other members of your family and ask them to have a test before they start a family, or have any more children. Men and women should both be tested.
- The test is a simple blood test and only takes a few minutes. People can ask for the test at any time in their life.
More information?

If you have any questions about any of the information in this leaflet, please talk to your Health Visitor, GP or local genetics service.

**West of Scotland Regional Genetics Service**
Level 2, Laboratory Medicine Building
Southern General Hospital
1345 Govan Road
Glasgow
G51 4TF

Phone: 0141 354 9200

For people who live in: Greater Glasgow, Argyll & Clyde, Ayrshire & Arran, Forth Valley, Lanarkshire and Dumfries & Galloway

**East of Scotland Regional Genetics Service**
Human Genetics Unit
Level 6 Ninewells Hospital and Medical School
Dundee
DD1 9SY

Phone: 01382 632035

For people who live in: Dundee, Perth, North Fife, Angus and Perthshire
North of Scotland Clinical Genetics Service
Ground floor, Ashgrove House
Forsterhill
Aberdeen
AB25 2ZA
Phone: 01224 552120
For people who live in: Grampian, Highland, Orkney, Shetland and Western Isles

Inverness Clinical Genetics Office Maternity Annexe
Raigmore Hospital
Old Perth Road
Inverness IV2 3UJ
Phone: 01463 705902
For people who live in: Grampian, Highland, Orkney, Shetland and Western Isles
South East of Scotland Regional Genetics Service
Department of Clinical Genetics
Western General Hospital
Crewe Road
Edinburgh
EH4 2XU

Phone: 0131 537 1116

For people who live in: Lothian, Fife and the Borders

UK Thalassaemia Society
19 The Broadway
Southgate Circus,
London
N14 6PH

Phone: 020 8882 0011

Email: office@ukts.org

Website: www.ukts.org