

People from many regions of the world including south China, Vietnam, Cambodia, Laos, and Thailand often have the alpha thalassemia trait.

People with alpha thalassemia trait generally experience no symptoms.

You may have alpha thalassemia trait and not know it.



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Have You Been
Tested For Alpha
Thalassemia Trait?

Thalassemia is the name of a group of genetic blood disorders. Over two million people in the United States have the genetic trait for thalassemia.

You may be one of them.

There are two very important reasons for you to find out if you have **alpha thalassemia trait**:

First, when two people who both have **alpha thalassemia trait** have a child, there is a one in four (25%) chance that their child will be born with a **serious blood disease** that requires lifelong blood transfusions and drug treatments.

Second, some doctors may mistake **alpha thalassemia trait** for another condition and prescribe the wrong treatment for you.

Finding out if you have **alpha thalassemia trait** is easy.

The first step to finding out if you have the **alpha thalassemia trait** is to ask your doctor to look at the size of your red blood cells. This is shown by the Mean Corpuscular Volume (MCV) of your Complete Blood Count (CBC). Your doctor may already have a record of your CBC.

If your MCV reading is less than 75, you may have **thalassemia trait**. Additional testing, including a hemoglobin electrophoresis and a serum ferritin, will be necessary to determine if you have **alpha thalassemia trait**. These tests can be ordered by your doctor.

There are two kinds of **alpha thalassemia trait**:

1



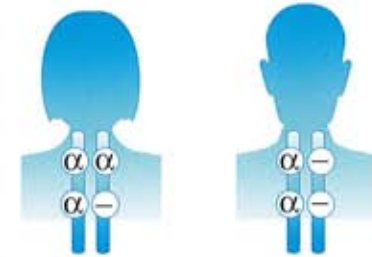
Silent carrier:
This condition causes no health problems and can only be diagnosed by special DNA testing.

2

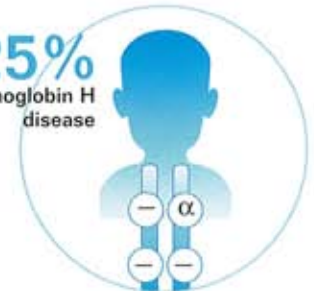


Alpha thalassemia trait:
This condition also generally causes no health problems other than a possible mild anemia. The red blood cells are smaller than usual. Doctors often mistake **alpha thalassemia trait** for iron deficiency anemia.

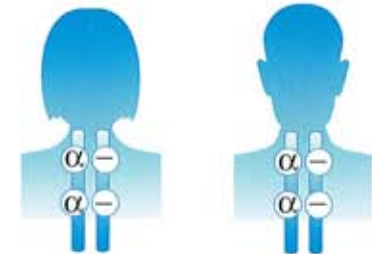
If one parent has the trait for **alpha thalassemia** the other parent is a silent carrier, there is a **25%** chance with **each** pregnancy that their child will be born with **hemoglobin H disease**. This condition can result in serious health problems, such as enlargement of the spleen, bone deformities, and fatigue.



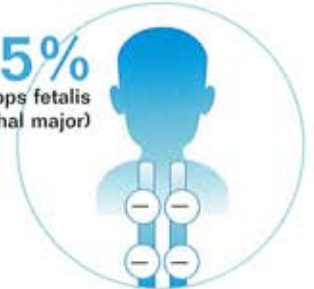
25%
hemoglobin H disease



If both parents carry **alpha thalassemia trait**, there is a **25%** chance with **each** pregnancy that the child may inherit **hydrops fetalis**, also known as **alpha thalassemia major**. This condition requires treatment during pregnancy in order for the baby to survive.



25%
hydrops fetalis
(alpha thal major)



For more information about thalassemia, please contact:
Cooley's Anemia Foundation at (800) 522-7222
or info@cooleysanemia.org
You can also visit our web site at www.cooleysanemia.org.

If you are tested for **alpha thalassemia trait** and are found to be a trait carrier, your spouse should also be tested for **alpha thalassemia trait**.

If you and your spouse both carry **alpha thalassemia trait** and plan to have children, you should seek the advice of a genetic counselor.