

# Hemolytic Anemia



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# Hemolytic Anemia

- Hemolytic anemia is a disorder in which red blood cells are destroyed faster than they can be made. The destruction of red blood cells is called hemolysis.
- Red blood cells carry oxygen to all parts of your body. If you have a lower than normal amount of red blood cells, you have anemia

# Hemolytic anemia can be inherited or acquired

- Inherited hemolytic anemia happens when parents pass the gene for the condition on to their children.
- Acquired hemolytic anemia is not something you are born with. You develop the condition later.

# What causes hemolytic anemia?

- Inherited

With the inherited type, parents pass the genes for the condition on to their children. Two common causes of this type of anemia are sickle cell anemia and thalassemia. These conditions produce red blood cells that don't live as long as normal red blood cells

# What causes hemolytic anemia?

- Acquired
  - Certain infections, which may be viral or bacterial
  - Medicines, such as penicillin, antimalarial medicines,
  - Blood cancers
  - Autoimmune disorders, such as lupus, rheumatoid arthritis, or ulcerative colitis
  - Certain tumors
  - An overactive spleen (hypersplenism)
  - Mechanical heart valves that may damage red blood cells as they leave the heart

# Symptoms

- Abnormal paleness or lack of color of the skin
- Yellowish skin, eyes, and mouth (jaundice)
- Dark-colored urine
- Fever
- Weakness
- Dizziness
- Confusion
- Can't handle physical activity
- Enlarged spleen and liver
- Increased heart rate (tachycardia)
- Heart murmur

# Diagnosis

- Complete blood count (CBC). This test measures many different parts of your blood.
- Other blood tests. If the CBC test shows that you have anemia, you may have other blood tests. These can find out what type of anemia you have and how serious it is.
- Urine test. This can check for hemoglobin (a protein in red blood cells) and iron.
- Bone marrow aspiration or biopsy. This involves taking a small sample of bone marrow fluid (aspiration) or solid bone marrow tissue (called a core biopsy). The sample is usually taken from the hip bones. It is checked for the number, size, and maturity of blood cells or abnormal cells.

# Treatment

- The treatment for hemolytic anemia will vary depending on the cause of the illness. Treatment may include:

Blood transfusions

Corticosteroid medicines

- Treatment to strengthen your immune system (using intravenous immune globulin)
- Rituximab
- In more severe cases, the following treatments may be needed:

Surgery to remove the spleen

Medicine to reduce the strength of your immune system  
(immunosuppressive therapy)