

# Let's Eradicate Thalassemia

**I**n India, there are almost 400,000 Thalassemia Major Patients. And every year 10,000 children are born with Thalassemia Major. There is 1000 Thalassemia Major Patients in Ahmedabad and this is on increase.

Thalassemia Major is a genetic blood disorder, where patient can not produce normal hemoglobin. The pair of genes, responsible for production of hemoglobin, is defective in Thal Major Patients. Each gene is received from each parent. So both parents are having one defective gene and one normal gene. They are called Thalassemia Minor. This is not a disease, it is a carrier state. They are usually normal because the normal gene masks the effect of abnormal gene. They live a normal and healthy life and would not know about his / her Thalassemia carrier state unless a test is done to detect it. It is estimated that 3 to 3.5 % population of India may be Thalassemia Minor. This disease is more prevalent in Sindhi, Punjabi, Gujarati, Khoja, Meman & Lohana cast. Because of inter cast marriages, it has been seen in other casts also.

Thalassemia Major is an incurable disease.

They are suffering of pallor, weakness, growth retardation, bone deformities etc. For survival, they need repeated Red cells transfusion at two to three weeks' interval. Due to repeated transfusions, there is an iron overload in the body, which gets deposited in heart, liver & pancreas. Excess iron has to be removed with chelator drug which is injected under the skin or given orally. This drug is expensive and difficult to administer. They are at increased risk of blood borne infections like HIV, Hepatitis B and Hepatitis C. Family of Thalassemic child undergoes huge sufferings, pain and expenses.

For prevention of Thalassemia, requires awareness and sensitivity about this subject. All young people should go for Thalassemia screening test before marriage. A Thalassemia Minor person should not marry another Thalassemia Minor person. If both married partners are found Thalassemia Minor, the birth of a Thalassemia Major Child can be prevented by pre-birth check up. But this procedure is expensive, risky and painful.

Only step that can eradicate Thalassemia from the society is awareness about Thalassemia. In this

direction Prathama has taken initiative and started "Thalassemia screening" in youngster and newly married couples. Its up to you, whether you want to give birth to Thalassemia Major child whose life is full of pain and suffering or would like to get yourself tested for Thalassemia minor. Prathama organizes Thalassemia testing drives and you can get yourself tested for Thalassemia at a very nominal service charges at Prathama. Prathama in last quarter have done 8400 Thalassemia tests and percentage of Thalassemia minor trait is almost 3%-4%. Individuals detected Thalassemia minor are given free consultation by experts. Individuals detected Thalassemia minor are only carriers of it, but if married to another Thalassemia minor, can give birth to Thalassemia MAJOR child. This can happen in your family, so act now.

To organize Thalassemia screening drive contact:-  
**Mr. Matthew Daniel at 9825808909**

For more information on Thalassemia contact:-  
**Dr. Kishore Maheshwari at 9974216255**