

# G6PD (Glucose-6-phosphate dehydrogenase) deficiency



## Information for Patients and Families

Glucose-6-phosphate dehydrogenase deficiency (or G6PD deficiency) is a condition that affects red cells in the blood.

G6PD deficiency is an inherited condition. This means children are born with it, and it persists throughout their life. The condition affects mostly boys and is usually passed on from their mother even though she may not have any symptoms herself. There are about 400 million people in the world with G6PD deficiency, making it one of the most common conditions affecting red blood cells. It is more common in some populations, such as people with Southeast Asian, Mediterranean or African ancestry.

G6PD is a protein found in red cells in the blood that has an important role in protecting red cells from damage. Red cells are important, as they carry oxygen around the body. In G6PD deficiency there is a lower level of G6PD in the red cells which makes them more sensitive to breaking down in a process called haemolysis.

The symptoms of G6PD are variable, although most children have no symptoms and live a normal life as long as they avoid certain foods and medicines.

### Symptoms of G6PD deficiency include:

- Babies may have early onset and/or severe jaundice
- Jaundice (yellowing of skin and/or white of the eyes)
- Pallor (pale skin)
- Increasing tiredness
- Dark coloured urine
- Back or tummy pain

**Contact your doctor if your child has any of the above symptoms**

## Living with G6PD

- You should tell the doctor looking after your child that he/she has G6PD deficiency.
- You should always check with your doctor or pharmacist before starting new medicines for your child.
- Most people just need to know which foods and medicines they should avoid. Common medications, chemicals or foods to avoid **include** (and are not limited to) the following:

<b>Antibiotics:</b>	Nitrofurantoin Co-trimoxazole Chloramphenicol
<b>Anti-malarial drugs:</b>	Chloroquine Primaquine
<b>Chemicals:</b>	Moth balls (naphthalene)
<b>Foods:</b>	Fava beans (broad beans)
<b>Others:</b>	Black Henna (indigofera tinctoria) Red Egyption Henna (Lawsonia inermis)

## More Information on G6PD

You can find out more about G6PD by talking to your family doctor. The following websites also contain helpful information:

- [www.g6pd.org](http://www.g6pd.org)
- [www.g6pddeficiency.org](http://www.g6pddeficiency.org)