



What is Hemochromatosis?

Hemochromatosis is a life-long genetic disorder found most often in Caucasians of Northern Eastern descent. The genetic change causes an abnormal increase in the amount of iron stored in your body.

I thought having a high iron level was good for me?

It is good to a point, but people with Hemochromatosis have an abnormal increase in iron that can be harmful.

How can an increase in iron harm me?

Normally iron is stored in the bone marrow, liver and red blood cells. When there is excess iron, it is deposited in other organs such as the Heart, Pituitary, Thyroid, Adrenal Glands, Pancreas and Testes. These iron deposits can damage these organs leading to many different diseases.

Are there other harmful effects of having increased iron?

The body tries to get rid of the iron by making more red blood cells. A very high red blood cell count can cause the blood to be very thick, reducing the speed with which it travels through the blood vessels. This can lead to blood clots, heart attack or stroke.

What can I do to prevent organ damage?

See your doctor for a complete evaluation. Only your doctor can diagnose this disease. S/he may do genetic tests to look for the genetic variation associated with this disease and/or blood tests to evaluate how your body is processing iron.

How is Hemochromatosis treated?

The iron level in the blood is extremely high. Your doctor may recommend that you have a pint of blood removed at frequent, regular intervals, until your blood tests are normal. When the tests are normal, your doctor may recommend that you have blood tests taken at less frequent, regular intervals.

Where can I get treatment?

The Miller-Keystone Blood Center has a variance from the FDA to collect and test blood from people with Hemochromatosis. This way you are getting healthy and also helping to save a life of someone in your community. The blood center can work with your doctor to treat you, and you can help the community blood supply at the same time.

To make an appointment call Special Collections at the Miller-Keystone Blood Center: 800.223.6667. For questions please call Diane Wiest, RN at extension 1245.



MILLER-KEYSTONE
BLOOD CENTER