



Thalassemia Burden in West Bengal

Why in News?

On [World Thalassemia Day](#), **West Bengal** experts expressed concern over the State's **high Thalassemia prevalence**, which exceeds the national average.

Key Points

- **World Thalassemia Day:**
 - It is observed every year on **8th May** as a global effort for prevention, awareness and early diagnosis for **inherited blood disorder** disease **Thalassemia**.
 - The **theme for 2025** is "**Together for Thalassemia: Uniting Communities, Prioritizing Patients**".
- **National Burden and High-Risk Communities:**
 - According to the [2016 National Health Mission report](#), 10,000 to 15,000 babies with Thalassemia Major are born annually in India.
 - **Communities with higher carrier** rates include Bengalis, Sindhis, Punjabis, and Gujaratis.
- **Alarming Prevalence in West Bengal:**
 - According to the **West Bengal Health Department**, 6% to 10% of the State's population carries the disease, compared to the national average of 3% to 4% ([2011 Census](#) data).
 - **West Bengal's Thalassemia burden is worsened by:**
 - Low public awareness
 - Intra-community marriages
 - Insufficient early screening
 - The State has over **18,000 transfusion-dependent patients** and a **2.5% patient positivity rate**, as per the State Health Department.
 - **State Efforts:**
 - West Bengal has **established 36 Thalassemia Control Units (TCUs)** across districts.
 - These **TCUs focus on first-trimester pregnancy screening** and **screening among adolescents** to prevent future transmission.
 - **Legal and Social Challenges:**
 - There is **no national law preventing marriages** between Thalassemia carriers.
 - Health officials identify **intra-community marriages** as a key social challenge and emphasize **early screening and awareness to prevent Thalassemia in children**.

State PCS Course

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UPPCS

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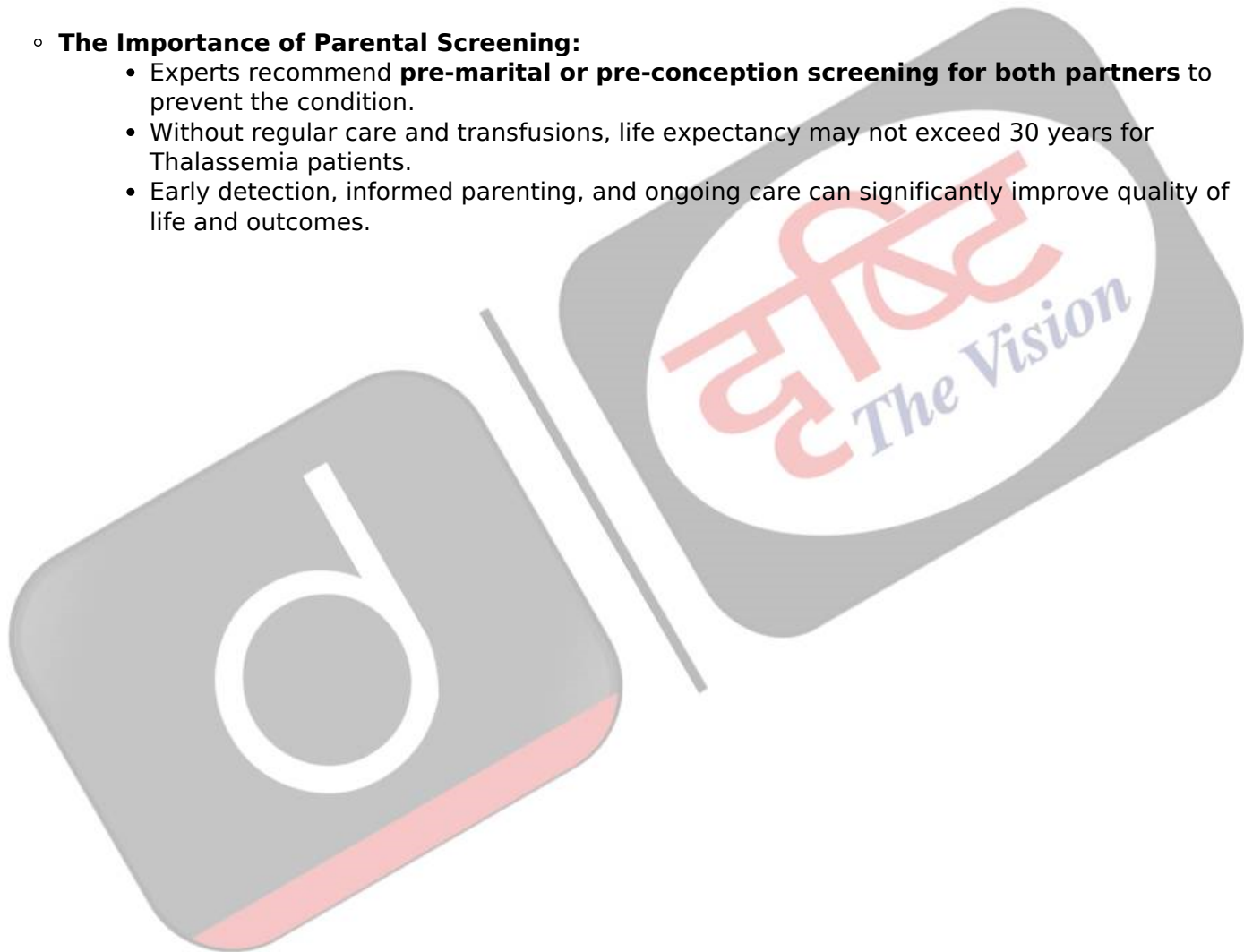
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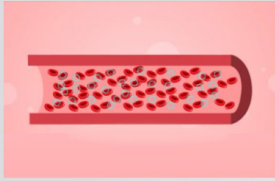
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• The Importance of Parental Screening:

- Experts recommend **pre-marital or pre-conception screening for both partners** to prevent the condition.
- Without regular care and transfusions, life expectancy may not exceed 30 years for Thalassemia patients.
- Early detection, informed parenting, and ongoing care can significantly improve quality of life and outcomes.





World Thalassemia Day



Definition

Thalassemia (thal-uh-SEE-me-uh) is an inherited blood disorder. It affects your body's ability to produce normal hemoglobin. If you have thalassemia, your body produces fewer healthy hemoglobin proteins, and your bone marrow produces fewer healthy red blood cells.

Statistics Around Thalassemia

Thalassemia affects approximately **4.4** out of every **10,000** live births throughout the world.

Types

→ **Alpha Thalassemia:** Four genes are inherited, two from each parent, that make alpha globin protein chains. When one or more genes are defective, alpha thalassemia is developed.

→ **Beta Thalassemia:** Two beta-globin genes, one from each parent are inherited. Your anemia symptoms and how severe your condition is depends on how many genes are defective and which part of the beta globin protein chain contains the defect.

Symptoms of Thalassemia

Asymptomatic

- (no symptoms)

Mild to Moderate Symptoms

- Growth problems
- Delayed puberty
- Bone abnormalities, such as osteoporosis
- An enlarged spleen

Severe Symptoms

- Poor appetite.
- Pale or yellowish skin (jaundice).
- Urine that's dark or tea-colored.
- Irregular bone structure in your face.

