



BI-LO Charities Children's Cancer Center

Spherocytosis Fact Sheet

Spherocytosis is a hereditary disorder affecting red blood cells that causes the surface of the red cell to be fragile. In children with this condition, the red blood cells are shaped like spheres, and they break very easily. This disease also causes mild to severe anemia.

Some of the symptoms of spherocytosis include yellowing of the skin and eyes (jaundice), fatigue, irritability, shortness of breath, gallstones, and weakness. A child with spherocytosis may need shortened or reduced days or rest periods during the day.

In children under 5 years old, the condition is managed by treating the symptoms. At the age of 5, the child can have his or her spleen removed, which often significantly improves the condition. However, these children are at risk of developing severe infections. If an infection is developing—often indicated by a fever greater than 100.4 degrees—the child should see a doctor immediately for a blood culture and antibiotics.