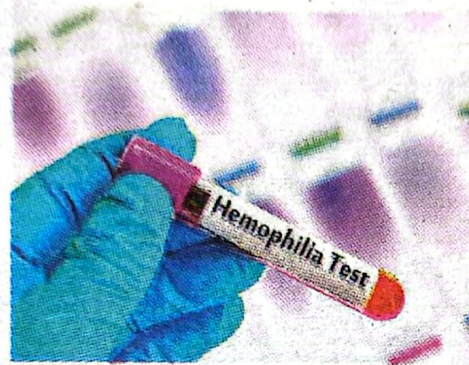


Who needs a haemophilia test?

Q: Dear Doctor,
Can haemophilia be tested like any other genetic disease? Who needs to get tested? And where can one go?

Hanifa



A: Dear Hanifa, Haemophilia is a rare bleeding disorder in which the blood does not clot normally and the person with the disease may bleed for a longer time than others after an injury. Haemophilia can be tested by doctors and the only way to detect it is through a blood test to measure the clotting factor level, the type of haemophilia and severity a person is suffering from.

Diagnosis of the disease depends on the personal history, family medical history, physician examination, which are done by the physician and blood test results which will show what type of haemophilia the patient has and how severe it is.

Diagnosis of the disease includes, screening tests and clotting factors tests. Screening tests are blood tests that show if the blood is clotting properly, while the clotting factor tests also known as factor assays, are required to diagnose a bleeding disorder.

There are two main types of haemophilia, haemophilia A, which occurs as a result

of factor VIII deficiency and haemophilia type B, which is due to factor IX deficiency.

Some of the signs and symptoms of the disease are bleeding on the body's surface (external bleeding) or inside the body (internal bleeding) especially the knees, ankles and elbows or get bruising.

The bleeding can damage organs or tissues and may be life threatening. However, there are also signs and symptoms which occur depending on the severity of the disease and these are prolonged bleeding, especially after trauma or surgery say after circumcision, tooth extraction, small cuts and injections, easy bruising especially after minor trauma, or like in crawling babies. The main treatment for haemophilia is replacement therapy with the deficient clotting factor on a regular basis to prevent bleeding or as needed to stop bleeding when it occurs. This can be done in hospitals or at home with trained health workers.