

Cooley's anemia is an inherited disease of the blood which, while found in other populations, is peculiar to people of Mediterranean ancestry. It is non contagious but passed from parent to child by inheritance of a gene defect.

There are two main forms of Cooley's anemia—the disease and the trait.

1. Persons born with the disease have defective red blood cells which are unable to carry enough oxygen to the body's vital organs. This results in severe anemia and ultimately death.
2. Persons born with the trait can be healthy and lead normal lives. If, however, two people with the trait marry, their children may inherit a defective gene from each and develop the severe form of Cooley's anemia.

UNICO National and its chapters have raised hundreds of thousands of dollars in an effort to find a cure. Affected children, who used to only live to five years of age, now live well into adulthood. But, a cure has not been found. Funds are still needed for research, treatment, transfusions, and medical costs that burden family resources while they await a cure.