

# Blood brothers: Spanish newborn helps heal sibling

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A Spanish boy with a serious form of anemia has recovered after a groundbreaking procedure using blood from the umbilical cord of his genetically-selected brother, authorities said Friday.

"Little Andres has been able to heal thanks to the implantation of [blood](#) from his brother's [umbilical cord](#)," health authorities in the Spanish region of Andalusia said in a statement.

It was the first procedure of its type to be carried out to completion in Spain, it said.

The seven-year-old's brother Javier was born in October following in-vitro [fertilisation](#) that used an embryo not containing the [genetic fault](#) Andres suffered from. The embryo was later implanted in his mother's uterus.

The transplant in January at Virgen del Rocio hospital in Sevilla allowed Andres to heal from [beta thalassemia](#) major, the most serious form of genetic anemia caused by [mutations](#) in hemoglobin genes.

He now only returns to the hospital for routine visits -- and no longer requires the blood transfusions that had been vital before the procedure.

Andres' mother told Spanish radio on Friday that the boy is "very happy. He has regained his will to play, to eat. It has changed his life."

Beta thalassemia is often found in countries along the Mediterranean as well as in the Middle East, southern and eastern Asia, Africa and the Caribbean.

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