Sickle Cell Disease
Tips for Healthy Living

Living Well With Sickle Cell Disease

People with sickle cell disease can live full lives and enjoy most of the activities that other people do. The following tips will help you, or someone you know with sickle cell disease, stay as healthy as possible.

- Find good medical care. Sickle cell disease is a complex disease. Good quality medical care from doctors and nurses who know a lot about the disease can help prevent some serious problems. Often the best choice is a hematologist (a doctor who specializes in blood diseases) working with a team of specialists.
- Get regular checkups. Regular health checkups with a primary care doctor can help prevent some serious problems.
  - Babies from birth to 1 year of age should see a doctor every 2 to 3 months.
  - Children from 1 to 2 years of age should see a doctor at least every 3 months.
  - Children and adults from 2 years of age or older should see a doctor at least once every year.
- Prevent infections. Common illnesses, like the flu, can quickly become dangerous for a child with sickle cell disease. The best defense is to take simple steps to help prevent infections.
- Learn healthy habits. People with sickle cell disease should drink 8 to 10 glasses of water every day and eat healthy food. They also should try not to get too hot, too cold, or too tired.
  - Children can, and should, participate in physical activity to help stay healthy. However, it's important that they don't overdo it, rest when tired, and drink plenty of water.
- Look for clinical studies. New clinical research studies are happening all the time to find better treatments and, hopefully, a cure for sickle cell disease. People who participate in these studies might have access to new medicines and treatment options.
- Get support. Find a patient support group or community-based organization that can provide information, assistance, and support.

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