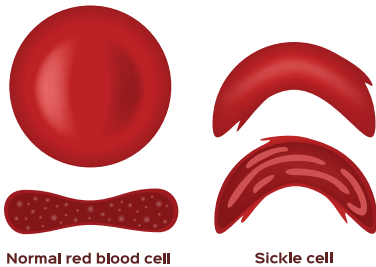


# Living well with sickle cell

Sickle cell disease (SCD) is a group of inherited blood disorders. With SCD, red blood cells are crescent or “sickle” shaped. They are also stiff, which makes it hard for them to move throughout the body. This can block blood flow, causing severe pain, infections, eye problems and stroke.



## CAN SCD BE CURED?

Some people with SCD can be cured with a blood and bone marrow transplant. There are also medications that help lower symptoms and problems from the disease.

People with SCD should work with their doctors to find out which treatment is best for them. With the right medical care, many people with SCD can live full lives.



If you or your child has SCD, follow these tips to feel your best and avoid complications:

- **See your doctor:** Regular health checkups are essential when you have SCD. Ask your doctor how often you should have checkups.
- **Prevent infections:** Infections like the flu can be dangerous for people with SCD. Take steps to prevent them, like frequent handwashing, avoiding people who are sick and getting recommended vaccines.
- **Drink plenty of water:** Aim to drink eight to 10 glasses of water each day.
- **Eat a healthy diet:** Good nutrition is important. Your doctor or nutritionist can help you create a healthy eating plan that works for you.
- **Get exercise:** Stay active, but don't do strenuous or very difficult exercise. Take breaks when you need to, and drink plenty of water.
- **Avoid extreme heat and cold:** Sudden changes in temperature can cause problems like severe pain. Don't jump into very cold or hot water.

## GET EMERGENCY CARE WHEN NEEDED



If you or your child has SCD with these symptoms, seek emergency medical care:

- **Severe anemia:** Signs include shortness of breath, dizziness, irregular heartbeat or extreme tiredness.
- **Fever:** A fever higher than 101.3 requires antibiotics right away.
- **Acute chest syndrome:** Symptoms of this complication include chest pain, coughing, fever and trouble breathing.
- **Stroke:** Signs include sudden weakness or numbness on one side of the body, confusion or trouble seeing, talking or walking.

Sources: National Heart, Lung and Blood Institute, Sickle Cell Disease Association of America