Sickle Cell Disease

Sickle Cell Disease Association of Florida, Inc.

Serving individuals and families impacted by sickle cell disease in the State of Florida since 1976.

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Sickle Cell Disease Resources

For more information visit:

Florida Partnership for Access to Sickle Cell Services
http://floridasickle.org

Sickle Cell Disease Association of America
http://www.sicklecelldisease.org

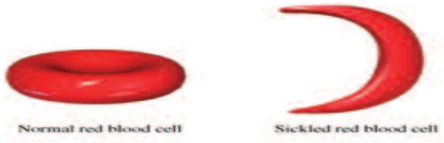
Sickle Cell Information Center
http://www.scinfo.org

Center for Sickle Cell Disease at Howard University
www.sicklecell.howard.edu

This brochure was created by the Florida Department of Health's Women's Health Program in partnership with the Sickle Cell Disease Association of Florida, Inc.

What is Sickle Cell Anemia?

Sickle Cell Anemia is a serious disease in which the body makes sickle-shaped red blood cells. "Sickle-shaped" means that the red blood cells are shaped like a "C."



Normal red blood cells are disc-shaped and look like doughnuts without holes in the center. They move easily through your blood vessels. Red blood cells contain the protein hemoglobin. This iron-rich protein gives blood its red color and carries oxygen from the lungs to the rest of the body.

Sickle cells contain abnormal hemoglobin that causes the cells to have a sickle shape. Sickle-shaped cells do not move easily through your blood vessels. They're stiff and sticky and tend to form clumps and get stuck in the blood vessels. The clumps of sickle cells block blood flow in the blood vessels that lead to the limbs and organs. Blocked blood vessels can cause pain, serious infections, and organ damage.

In Sickle Cell Anemia, a lower-than-normal number of red blood cells occurs because sickle cells don't last very long. Sickle cells usually die after only about 10 to 20 days. The bone marrow cannot make new red blood cells fast enough to replace the dying ones.

Is there a cure for Sickle Cell?

Sickle Cell Anemia has no widely available cure. However, there are treatments for the symptoms and complications of the disease. Bone marrow transplants may offer a cure in a small number of cases.

Sickle Cell Anemia Trait

Sickle Cell Anemia has no widely available cure. However, there are treatments for the symptoms and complications of the disease. Bone marrow transplant may offer a cure in a small number of cases.

People who inherit a Sickle Cell gene from one parent and a normal gene from the other parent have a condition called Sickle Cell Trait. Sickle Cell Trait is different from Sickle Cell Anemia. People who have Sickle Cell Trait don't have the disease, but they have one of the genes that cause it. Like people who have Sickle Cell Anemia, those who have Sickle Cell Trait can pass the gene to their children.

Signs and Symptoms Related to Sickle Cell Anemia

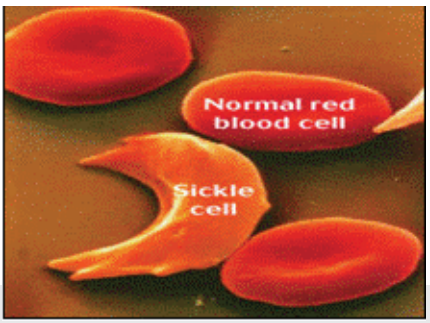
The most common symptom of Anemia is fatigue (feeling tired or weak). Other signs and symptoms of anemia include:

- **Shortness of breath**
- **Dizziness**
- **Headache**
- **Coldness in the hands and feet**
- **Pale skin**
- **Chest pain**

The Importance of Stress Management

Almost all physical health conditions can be made worse by stress. Emotional stress typically weakens our immune system. Stress management techniques such as yoga, deep breathing, meditation, and having fun may be helpful.

Source: www.cdc.gov



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Women's Health
Florida Department of Health

Sickle Cell Disease Myths

Myth: Only African Americans get Sickle Cell disease.

Reality: Sickle Cell is a disease that affects people of all different racial and ethnic backgrounds, including African, Arabian, Israeli, Greek, Italian, Hispanic, Turkish, and Pakistani.

Myth: : If our child has the disease, it means that she got the Sickle Cell gene from both my spouse and me.

Reality: This is true for one form of the disease (known as HbSS), but there are other types in which only one parent has passed on the Sickle Cell gene and the other has passed on a gene for another type of Anemia, such as Thalassemia (thal-uh-see-mee-uh), that combine to produce Sickle Cell disease.

Myth: I do not need to tell the doctors about my child having Sickle Cell Trait, because this condition has no health implications at all.

Reality: Although it is a rare occurrence, Sickle Cell Trait can cause bleeding from the kidneys. Making sure that you and your child's doctor keep up-to-date with Sickle Cell care will allow you to enjoy the benefits of future medical advances. The future looks bright because more treatments are in the research pipeline.

Myth: All of Sickle Cell care is medical in nature and administered by doctors and other healthcare workers. Nothing is under our control as a family.

Reality: There is quite a bit a family can do to care for a child with Sickle Cell. Families can learn to recognize problems early on, when medical treatment often is more effective, and they can take precautions to ward off pain crises.

Myth: You can catch Sickle Cell disease from another person.

Reality: Sickle Cell is not contagious. It's strictly an inherited disease, and only people who are born with this genetic defect can develop it.