

# Sickle Cell Disease

## Tips for Healthy Living

If you have sickle cell disease, you can live a full life and enjoy the things that most other people do. These tips will help you stay as healthy as possible.

### Checklist

#### Good Health Care

- ✓ Work closely with your doctor to develop your own unique care plan.
- ✓ Build relationships with a hematologist and a team of other specialists so they are available for you when needed.

#### Healthy Lifestyle

- ✓ Stay active.
- ✓ Drink 8–10 glasses of water daily.
- ✓ Follow a heart-healthy eating plan that includes limiting alcohol.
- ✓ Aim for 7–8 hours of sleep a night.

#### Prevent Infections

- ✓ Children under 5 years old should take penicillin regularly.
- ✓ Adults and children should get scheduled vaccines, including flu shots.
- ✓ Wash hands often.

### Topics to Discuss with Your Doctor

#### Pain Control

- ✓ How has your pain been since your last visit?
- ✓ What do you do to control pain?

# Sickle Cell Disease

## Tips for Healthy Living (cont.)

### Treatment Options

- ✓ Can hydroxyurea help? Are there side effects?
- ✓ Do you need blood transfusions?
- ✓ What lifestyle changes can you make to better manage your symptoms?

### Emotional and Social Support

- ✓ Are there people you can talk to or groups you can join?
- ✓ How can you address any fears, worries, or stresses you may be having?

## Emergency Guide

### When to Seek Help

It is important to have a plan to get help quickly if there is a problem. Make sure the care facility you choose can obtain your health records, or keep a copy that you can bring.

### Call 9-1-1 or seek emergency care right away for:

- ✓ Fever above 101°F
- ✓ Difficulty breathing
- ✓ Chest pain
- ✓ Abdominal (belly) swelling
- ✓ Sudden vision problems
- ✓ Severe headache
- ✓ Sudden weakness or loss of feeling and movement
- ✓ Seizure
- ✓ Painful erection of the penis that lasts more than 4 hours
- ✓ Pain anywhere in the body that will not go away with treatment