

Sickle Cell Disease

Managing Pain

Currently, sickle cell disease has no widely available cure. However, if you have the disease, certain treatments can help with your pain.

Good health care is important for people who have sickle cell disease, so see your doctor regularly. Work with your doctor to create a pain control plan that makes sense for you, and carry it with you if you go to the emergency room.

A few things to know:



Mild pain is often treated at home. More severe pain may need to be treated in a clinic or hospital.



Fluids can help prevent dehydration, which can worsen pain.



Over-the-counter pain medicine can help with mild to moderate pain.



Stronger medicines called opioids may be prescribed for more severe pain.



Ask your doctor about a medicine called hydroxyurea that may decrease pain episodes. Some patients may benefit from taking a new medicine called L-glutamine oral powder. Talk to your doctor to determine if this medicine is right for you.

Other methods for managing pain include getting physical therapy, using a heating pad, or engaging in activities, such as listening to music, that help distract you from the pain.



National Heart, Lung,
and Blood Institute