

What can I do to protect my child from infection?

1. Give your child's prescribed dose of Penicillin twice daily.
2. Make sure your child receives Prevnar injections at your doctor's office.
3. Make sure your child gets a Pneumovax vaccine starting at age 2, then every 3 years thereafter during their routine sickle cell clinic visit.



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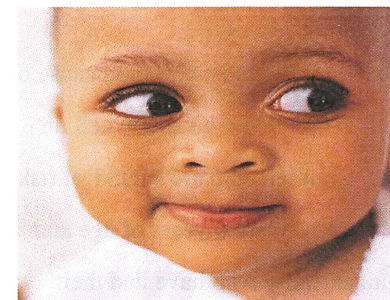
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UAB Pediatric Hematology



Infection in Sickle Cell Disease

A guide for parents

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Infection in Sick Cell Disease

Infection is the most common cause of death in children with sickle cell disease. Children who are MOST at risk are those who are 6 years of age and younger, those who have had their spleen removed, or who have had a blood infection in the past.

The “bug” that can make your child very ill is called Pneumococcus. This infection could even kill your child if it is not diagnosed right away.

Every child with sickle cell disease who has a fever of 101 or greater needs to be seen by their primary care provider or an Emergency Room physician immediately!!!!

Why are children with sickle cell disease at risk for infection?

People with sickle cell disease cannot fight infection very well because their spleen does not work like it should.

In a person without sickle cell disease, the spleen works to filter out broken down red blood cells and bacteria that cause infection. When a child has sickle cell disease, the spleen gets “clogged” with sickled cells and cannot filter infection like it should.

This means that if a Pneumococcus gets into the blood stream, it can spread rapidly and make a child sick to the point of death within a matter of hours.

Treatment for infection in sickle cell patients

The treatment for fever and infection in children with sickle cell disease should include:

- Drawing blood cultures and other labs as needed.
- Doing a chest X-ray if your child is having breathing problems.
- Giving antibiotics, either by shot or IV.
- Possible admission to the hospital.
- Giving IV fluids if needed.
- Follow-up in clinic as decided by your doctor or nurse-this will depend on how sick your child is.

