

TREATING PAIN

First: Try to treat the pain at home.

- Give Tylenol alternating with ibuprofen every 3 to 4 hours, around the clock.
- If this does not work, you should try Tylenol with codeine alternating with ibuprofen.
- Make sure your child drinks plenty of fluids and rest.
- Other suggestions: Soak in a warm bath, use a heating pad or massage the part of the body that hurts.
- Treat at home for 12–24 hours before going to the next step unless pain is not getting better or is getting worse.

The Next Step: Take your child to the emergency room. Here, your child may get IV fluids and/or IV pain medicine. Sometimes your child may even need to be admitted to the hospital until the pain gets much better.

At any time you may call your Hematology nurse.

Remember: If at any time your child has a fever of 101° or higher, they need to be seen by a doctor. Check your child's temperature before giving Tylenol or ibuprofen because these medicines will also lower a fever.

Attending Physicians

Roger Berkow, MD
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Thomas Howard, MD
Jeffrey Lebensburger, DO
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UAB DIVISION OF PEDIATRIC HEMATOLOGY and ONCOLOGY

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**After office hours, call (205) 939-9100
and ask for the Hematologist on call.

PAIN IN SICKLE CELL DISEASE



UAB DIVISION OF PEDIATRIC HEMATOLOGY AND ONCOLOGY

Office hours: Monday—Friday

8:30 am to 4:30 pm

PAIN IN SICKLE CELL DISEASE

The part of the blood that is most affected by sickle cell disease is the red blood cell. Most of the time, red blood cells are round, soft and slippery so they can get through blood vessels easily.

A red blood cell's job is to pick up oxygen from the lungs and take it to all the tissues in the body. It drops off the oxygen, picks up carbon dioxide, and takes it to the lungs. This is what we breathe out. If body tissues do not get the oxygen they need, they do not work properly. Also, without oxygen, they begin to hurt.



Normal red blood cell



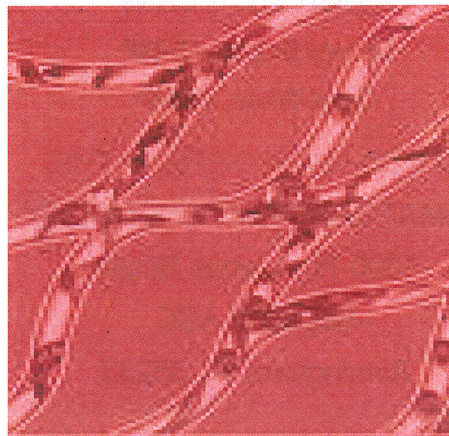
Sickled red blood cell

Sometimes in sickle cell patients the red blood cells change shape. They become "C" shaped or look kind of like a banana. In other words, they "sickle". They also get sticky on the outside.

There are many things that can make red blood cells "sickle". Some of the are:

- Infection
- Fever
- Dehydration
- A lack of oxygen
- Extremes of temperature

When red blood cells start to sickle they begin to stick to the inside of blood vessels and stick to each other. This creates a "dam" inside the blood vessel and keeps other red blood cells from getting through. If the red blood cells can't get to the tissue past the "dam" then that part of the body begins to hurt from the lack of oxygen. This can occur anywhere in the body, for example, the arms, legs, stomach, or back.



If your child has pain, they might cry. They might not move the part of their body that is hurting. You may also see swelling in the part of the body that is affected. This occurs mainly in younger children (infants and toddlers) and is called "Hand and Foot Syndrome" or dactylitis.