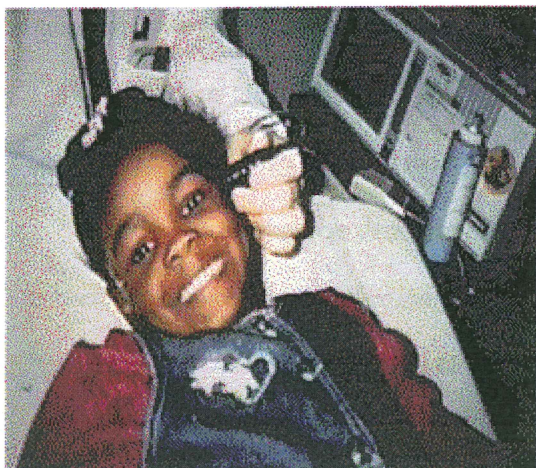


Screening for stroke

Thankfully, we now have a screening tool available which can help us identify children who may be at increased risk for having a stroke. It is called a transcranial doppler or TCD.

The TCD is a safe and painless test that uses a small probe to determine how fast blood is moving through the vessels in the brain. It is applied directly to the scalp in several locations. The faster the blood is moving, the more likely stroke will occur. By identifying those at risk for stroke earlier, we hope to be able to prevent the stroke from occurring at all.



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Stroke in Sickle Cell Disease



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Stroke in children with sickle cell disease

Stroke in children with sickle cell disease is a very serious but fairly rare problem. It is caused by sickled red blood cells blocking blood vessels in the brain. It only occurs in children who have Hemoglobin SS Disease (SS) or Hemoglobin S Beta Zero Thalassemia, (SB0Thal) which are the more severe types of sickle cell disease. One in every ten children with SS or SB0Thal will suffer from a stroke.



Signs and symptoms of stroke:

- Fainting
- Sudden weakness in the arm, leg, or whole body
- Difference in movement of one side of the face from the other
- Eye that suddenly turns in or out
- Severe headache
- Seizure
- Difficulty speaking

If you notice any of these signs, call your doctor and go to the hospital **IMMEDIATELY!!!**

If your child has had a stroke, the earlier he or she receives treatment, the better off they will be.

Immediate treatment includes admission to the hospital, most likely in the intensive care unit (ICU). Your child will need many tests, such as a CT scan (an x-ray of the brain) to look at the damage in the brain. They will also need several IVs in order to get IV fluids and blood transfusions.

Long term treatment will include monthly blood transfusions and chelation therapy. These treatments will be discussed at length with you and your child if stroke occurs. Additionally, your child may require physical, occupational or speech therapy to return to a more normal level of activity.