

# At Play-Social Activities

Your friend with sickle cell disease can participate in most sport activities. However, this person may need to take frequent time-outs to rest. If you notice this friend having difficulty breathing or walking dizzily, he or she should stop and rest. Your friend with sickle cell disease should also carry a bottle of water around because sports activities can easily dehydrate him or her. It often helps if the affected individual is given a temporary light task, this helps them to continue participation.

Please do not force your friend with sickle cell disease to carry heavy equipment and gear. Also, do not require him or her to wear tight and restrictive outfits. This will cause their sickled red blood cells to clog in tiny blood vessels. The individual with sickle cell disease is on your team to have fun, and not necessarily to experience the stress of winning. High altitudes should be avoided because it can be more difficult to breathe at these altitudes.

Your friend with sickle cell disease should stretch and walk around every thirty minutes to promote blood flow in his or her body when traveling by car, train or plane. Your friend can travel by commercial airline. Commercial airlines have compressed air compartments. There is plenty of oxygen in the airplane but the compressed air will put pressure on your friend's body. Frequent stretches are encouraged. Your friend should avoid extreme climate temperatures. Too hot a temperature will cause dehydration and can trigger a pain episode. Too cold a temperature will cause tiny blood vessels to constrict and trap sickled red blood cells. This can all lead to a pain episode. Individuals affected with Sickle Cell Disease cannot swim in cold water. It must be remembered that cold temperatures constrict blood vessels (make them smaller) and hot or warm temperatures dilate blood vessels (make them larger).

When relaxing, your friend with sickle cell disease should not drink alcoholic beverages because it can cause decreased and shallow respirations resulting in de-oxygenation of the blood, severe dehydration and liver disease. This will precipitate a pain episode due to increased sickling of red blood cells. Frequent alcoholic intake will result in liver disease.

Intimacy is normal with your partner with sickle cell disease. Sickle cell disease is not a sexually transmitted disease. You should be careful not to put your whole bodyweight on top of your partner with sickle cell disease for a prolonged period of time. Weight upon his or her body may constrict blood vessels and cause the sickled blood cells to clog passages. This may trigger a pain episode. Also, try to avoid keeping your partner on a constrictive position for a prolonged period of time.

Individuals with sickle cell disease like to have fun. Laughter helps reduce their stress, and thus may reduce the possibility of an occurrence of the symptoms of sickle cell disease.

#### DISCLAIMER:

This information is for educational purpose only and is not intended to substitute for informed medical advice from your health care provider. You should not use this information to diagnose or treat a health problem or disease without consulting a qualified health care provider with any questions or concerns you may have regarding your condition or conditions of others.