

Pain Episodes (Also referred to as pain crises)

Not all pain is sickle cell related! However, some individuals with sickle cell disease will suffer excruciating pain requiring emergency room or clinic visits and pain medication for relief. The pain is typically throbbing and can affect several areas of the body. Pain and tenderness in the abdomen, back and joints are common. Fever can frequently accompany the pain episode.

A pain episode can be triggered by dehydration, infection, injury, cold exposure, atmospheric pressure, emotional stress, or strenuous exercise. Dehydration must be prevented by drinking water to avoid injury to tissues. Also, individuals with sickle cell disease should avoid extreme heat and cold as preventive measures. Hours of prolonged atmospheric pressure on the body, such as long airplane rides, hiking up tall mountains and long swimming activities, can trigger a pain episode. Eating a large heavy meal just before bedtime has been found to promote pain episodes for some individuals with sickle cell disease. Exercise is always good for the body; however, one should consult with his or her health care provider before starting an exercise regimen.

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.