

Division of Child and Family Health- Newborn Screening Follow-Up Program

Sickle Cell Disease (SCD)

Parent Fact Sheet

<p>Your baby’s newborn screen showed an abnormal hemoglobin called “S” or sickle hemoglobin and indicates your baby has a form of sickle cell disease (SCD). Hemoglobin is the protein in red blood cells that carries oxygen throughout the body. There are hundreds of hemoglobin types; the most common is hemoglobin “A”, which is normal hemoglobin. A person’s hemoglobin type is inherited from their parents. SCD is a group of inherited blood disorders that affects the shape and function of red blood cells. There are many types of SCD and some are more mild than others. Normal, healthy red blood cells are round and move through blood vessels to carry oxygen throughout the body. In SCD, the red blood cells are shaped like a crescent moon or sickle shaped. The sickle shaped cells are hard and sticky making it difficult to travel through blood vessels. The cells can get stuck and clog blood flow, which can cause pain as well as other complications. If SCD is left untreated, it can cause life-threatening infections, organ damage or even death. However, with early treatment, the child will most likely have a healthy life.</p>	
<p>Signs and Symptoms</p> <p><i>Please note: these findings may not be present in young infants or in milder forms of the disease</i></p>	<p>SCD is a condition with multiple forms. Symptoms and complications are different for each person and can range from mild to severe. Signs of the disease start to show usually around 5 to 6 months of age when the newborn hemoglobin levels decrease.</p> <p>Early signs of SCD include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sleeping longer or more often • Tiredness • Difficulty breathing • Pain or swelling in the hands or feet • Cold hands or feet • Pale skin
<p>Next Steps</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Get a repeat newborn screening test • Schedule an appointment with the local Pediatric Comprehensive Sickle Cell Center
<p>Treatment (if indicated)</p>	<p>The doctor will start penicillin to prevent pneumococcal infections. The Pediatric Hematologist will discuss other treatments as necessary.</p>
<p>Additional Resources</p>	<p>Baby’s First Test www.babysfirsttest.org Centers for Disease Control and Prevention https://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/sicklecell/index.html VDH Sickle Cell Program: http://www.vdh.virginia.gov/sickle-cell-programs/</p>

Educational content adapted from www.babysfirsttest.org and <https://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/sicklecell/index.html>

