VIRGINIA
Sickle Cell
awareness
PROGRAM

What is Sickle Cell Disease?

Sickle cell disease (SCD) is a term used to describe a group of inherited blood disorders. SCD affects the shape and function of red blood cells. It causes anemia, episodes of extreme pain and damage to major body organs. Sickle cell disease is inherited; you can't catch it.

Who Is At Risk for Sickle Cell Disease?

Sickle cell disease affects millions of people worldwide. It is most common in people whose families come from Africa, South or Central America, Caribbean Islands, Mediterranean countries (such as Turkey, Greece, and Italy), India, and Saudi Arabia.

What is Sickle Cell Trait?

Many Americans are healthy carriers of a single gene that causes sickle cell disease; this is called sickle cell trait (SCT). Sickle cell trait will never turn into sickle cell disease. People with SCT may be at risk for having a baby with sickle cell disease. If both parents have SCT, there is a 1 in 4 chance with each pregnancy that they will have a child with sickle cell anemia.

Sickle Cell Screening

We encourage people who are unaware of their trait status to ask their health care provider about testing. A simple blood test can be done.

All infants born in the United States after 2006 are tested for sickle cell trait. Talk to your child's doctor about his or her test results. Explain to your child what their sickle cell trait status means.

For more information contact:

Virginia Sickle Cell Awareness Program
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