

# About Sickle Cell Crisis



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## What is sickle cell crisis?

Sickle cell crisis happens when some of the red blood cells which are the wrong shape (sickle shaped instead of round), get stuck in your small blood vessels. This blocks blood flow through these vessels.

## How will I feel during a sickle cell crisis?

How you feel will depend on where the blood flow is blocked. If you have any of these signs, come to the Emergency Room **right away**:

- Bad pain.
- A bad headache.
- A fever of more than 101° Fahrenheit (38.3° Celsius).
- Trouble breathing.
- Chest pain.
- Feeling weak or very tired.
- Have vomiting.
- Have diarrhea (loose, watery stools).



## How can I keep from having a sickle cell crisis?

Here are some tips to help you keep from having a sickle cell crisis:

- Every day, **drink at least 8** glasses of liquid such as water or juice.
- **Do not** drink beer, wine or hard liquor.
- Take your medicines the way your health care provider has told you.
- Keep all appointments to see your health care providers as often as they want to see you.
- Find ways to keep yourself from having too much stress. Talking with family, friends, religious leaders or counselors may help. Pets, funny movies or books, hobbies and prayer may help, too.
- Get **8 hours** of sleep **every night**.
- Dress warmly in cold weather.
- **Do not** go to places that are high up in the mountains. The higher up you go, the thinner the air is. Your body will not get all the oxygen it needs.
- If you cut or scrape yourself, keep your wound clean. Cover it with a bandage.
- Exercise as your health care provider tells you. **Do not** exercise so hard or so long that you sweat.

