

Understanding Sickle Cell Disease

What is Sickle Cell Anemia: Sickle cell is a life-threatening blood disorder that is characterized by red blood cells that assume an abnormal, rigid sickle shape. Sickled cells can stop or slow blood flow to parts of the body, causing less oxygen to reach different areas, resulting in a pain crisis and other complications.

Sickle Cell Pain Crisis/C

Pain Management/ Treatment

A mild pain episode may be managed at school with the use of drinking increased fluids (preferably water) and non-narcotic pain medications like ibuprofen or acetaminophen. However, severe pain or any complication untreated can be life threatening. Seeking immediate treatment at a hospital or sickle cell center is expected.

Treatment to relieve mild to moderate pain may include any or all of the following:

- Fluids – water, fruit juice, popsicles, clear broth, jell-o
- Pain medication as directed by the physician
- Moist warm heat applications; **never** apply cold packs as these could increase vessel constriction
- If a child has a fever, phone parents immediately

Modifications for students with sickle cell disease

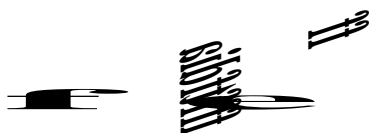
Under the category of other Health and Impairment or under Section 504 or the Rehabilitation Act, a child with sickle cell disease may qualify for Special Education through the Individuals with Disability Education Act (IDEA). However, if a child does not meet the guidelines for accommodations under these programs the school nurse (RN) can write accommodations under an Individual Health Plan (IHP).

The following represent accommodations that should be considered for a child with SCD. Other accommodations may be considered based on the individual needs.

Basic classroom guidelines

Anticipate more missed school days. The students' IEP should include the exclusion of mandatory attendance due to episodes of pain, routine medical treatments, and trips to the hospital. Aside from any materials or extra help that you can offer, if you anticipate or see a child starting to lag behind, request that her parents arrange for a tutor or education consultant at home or at the hospital. Allow for two sets of books, one for home and one for school.

Allow extra



Quality vs. Quantity

Student will be assigned a moderate workload with limited assignments requiring quality vs. quantity when absent from school for clinic visits, hospitalizations or complications resulting from the diagnosis of sickle cell disease. Justification: Stress can precipitate a pain episode. The student may feel overwhelmed and worried about missed work and assignments; shortening assignments and allowing modifications will reduce stress and make the task of