

Resources: Sickle Cell Myths



Myth: Only African Americans have sickle cell disease.



Fact: In the United States, sickle cell disease occurs in about 1 out of every 365 Black or African American births. Sickle cell disease affects people of many different racial and ethnic backgrounds including African, Arab, Hispanic/Latino, Israeli, Greek, Italian, Turkish, and Pakistani.



Myth: You can catch sickle cell disease from another person.



Fact: Sickle cell disease is not contagious. It is an inherited just like your skin, hair, and eye color. People with sickle cell disease inherit two sickle hemoglobin genes, one from each parent. If both parents carry the trait, or one parent has sickle cell disease and the other parent carries the trait, their child(ren) are at risk for inheriting sickle cell disease.



Myth: A routine blood test can determine if you have sickle cell disease or sickle cell trait.



Fact: A routine blood test will not tell you if you have sickle cell disease, sickle cell trait, or other hemoglobin disorders. A special test called hemoglobin electrophoresis (E-LEK-TRO-FOR-E-SIS) will determine if you have sickle cell disease or the trait.



Myth: People suffering from sickle cell disease die young.



Fact: There have been significant improvements in the treatment options for sickle cell disease. With routine medical care, medication compliance, and positive self-care habits, individuals with sickle cell disease can lead long and fruitful lives.

There is a lot of outdated information and literature circulating the internet, social media, book stores, and libraries. **Please contact your sickle cell care team if you have questions or concerns about something you have read or heard about sickle cell disease.** Lurie's sickle cell team is here to support you and your family. We can help you find accurate and up-to-date information and link you to any additional resources you or your family might need.

To contact the sickle cell nurse or doctor:

312-227-4813 (M-F 9am to 5pm)

312-227-4000 (After hours, ask for hematologist on call)

The Comprehensive Sickle Cell Program

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