

Living Well With Sickle Cell Disease

Lifestyle Tips to Help Reduce Pain for Individuals with Sickle Cell Disease



Hydration

- Drink plenty of water (8-10 glasses per day) to prevent dehydration.
- Eat a balanced diet rich in iron, folate, and antioxidants for red blood cell health.
- Avoid alcohol and caffeine as they contribute to dehydration.



Exercise and Exertion

- Avoid activities like marathon running or high-altitude hikes that may cause overexertion and lower oxygen levels. Low-to-moderate intensity physical exercise like walking is recommended.
- When exercising, take breaks, listen to your body, and consult with your healthcare providers before starting a new high-intensity exercise routine.



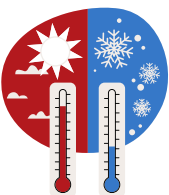
Stress

- Stress can trigger sickle cell crises due to its effects on inflammation and blood pressure.
- Practice relaxation techniques like deep breathing or meditation to manage stress.
- Seek professional mental health help or join support groups to help you manage the emotional burden of living with sickle cell disease and the chronic pain cycles.



Substance Avoidance

- Identify triggers; avoid situations that lead to smoking or drinking.
- Use nicotine replacement therapy, if needed; consider patches, gum, or lozenges to reduce cravings.
- Build a support system; spend time with non-smokers or non-drinkers in social settings.



Temperature

- Avoid extreme temperatures; being too hot or too cold can trigger a crisis.
- Dress appropriately for the weather and sudden temperature changes.
- Carry extra layers, even in warmer months, to ensure comfort in air conditioned spaces.

These resources were researched and gathered by intern Maryanne Aremu as part of her college capstone project. We greatly appreciate her work and insights on this project.

