

How to Live With Sickle Cell Disease

Although a diagnosis of sickle cell anemia might be devastating, patients can still live an entirely normal life with the proper care. Patients can live comfortably through treatment and lifestyle changes. Although sickle cell, like other [monogenic diseases](#), can be treated by strategies like [DNA](#) and RNA-based approaches, protein and substrate-based therapies observing specific lifestyle changes goes a long way in helping patients manage the condition. Sticking to the proper health care, eating healthy foods and regular checks are among lifestyle tweaks sickle cell patients can adopt to live normal lives. Here are ways to integrate lifestyle changes when managing sickle cell disease.



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Right Medical Care

Sickle cell disease is a sophisticated condition that needs effective care. A patient needs high-

quality care from doctors who understand the disease and can recommend the proper treatment routine. The goal of sickle cell treatment is to avoid [pain episodes](#), relieve symptoms and prevent further complications. Besides medication, the condition is also treated through the following surgical procedures:

Stem Cell

[Stem cell transplant](#) entails replacing the bone marrow of the affected sickle cell patient with healthy bone marrow from a compatible donor. The donor must not have sickle cell. It is critical to note that bone marrow transplant is a delicate procedure that can lead to death hence the need to have the procedure conducted by a professional. The procedure is primarily ideal for children, although more research is ongoing for adults.

Blood Transfusion

Under this approach, red blood cells are removed from donated blood, then transferred through a vein to a person with sickle cell anemia. The procedure increases the number of normal red blood cells, which helps reduce sickle cell symptoms and complications. Due to the complexity of the disease, some of the risks include immune response to the donor blood, infection, and excess iron buildup.

Stay Safe from Infections

A body handling sickle cells needs to maintain high immunity. Therefore, most doctors recommend observing basic practices to avoid weakening the body by infections. Most patients are required to go for vaccination while having an antibiotic supply to reduce the risk of infection. Overall, maintain simple practices such as regularly washing hands, cooking food thoroughly, and storing food correctly. If you plan to travel, consult your doctor for a recommendation on the medication you need to carry. It is advisable to avoid harmful things like extreme temperatures, alcohol, and smoking.

Join a Support Group

Battling sickle cells can have a mental toll on the patients due to the complexity of the disease. Enrolling in a support group allows you to bond and connect with other patients and share your experiences. In a group, you will be able to talk about your journey with ease without feeling judged. Additionally, support groups can also help patients build coping skills to manage their emotions in the future. Below are some forms of support groups to join:

??Online groups

These groups leverage the internet to connect members. The benefit of such groups is that

members from different locations can gather and share on different topics.

Therapy groups

These groups entail professional therapists who talk to sickle cell patients. In this case, the facilitator is usually a mental health expert who advises the patients on how to handle the disease.

Healthy habits

Although it is vital to stick to healthy habits for everyone, sickle cell patients need extra attention to minimize the chances of more pain and symptoms. Some of the healthy habits to observe include drinking enough water daily accompanied by healthy meal options. Additionally, patients should design a regular exercise routine and ensure sufficient hydration during and after any physical activity. Another tip for [working out](#) is not to overdo it. Working out should be in the best conditions, like cool temperatures. You can also consult professionals to recommend the proper habits to adopt. It is essential to avoid high-stress levels that can be responsible for frequent pain episodes and dangerous health problems.

Regular Checks

Checkups are important for reviewing the progress of your treatment. Checkups usually offer doctors an insight into managing your condition alongside updates on new medicines. Screening also allows doctors to train you in recognizing acute [complications](#) and remedies before visiting hospitals. Regular checks enable hospitals to remain proactive about caring for sickle cell disease patients while focusing on building a culture of communication, empathy, and accountability.

Endnote

Being diagnosed with sickle cell can sound like a death sentence, especially if you have no idea how to manage the disease and lead a normal life. To avoid the extreme symptoms of the diseases, patients should strive to remain active while observing healthy habits. In general, keep tabs with your doctor, who will guide you throughout your journey of battling the diseases. Remember to seek medical advice when you feel overwhelmed with the treatment.