



September Newsletter

Changing Lives, One Day, One Goal,
One Person at a Time



SICKLE CELL AWARENESS MONTH

Sickle Cell Awareness Month: Why It Matters

Sickle Cell Awareness Month was established to shed light on the struggles of those living with SCD and SCT, advocate for increased research funding, and raise awareness for potential donors of bone marrow and blood, which are critical in treating patients with SCD. By spreading awareness, we help educate the public about the disease, dispel myths, and encourage screenings that could lead to early detection and better management of the condition.

Myths and Misconceptions About Sickle Cell

Myth: Only people of African descent get SCD or SCT.

Fact: While SCD is most common in individuals of African descent, it can also affect people of Hispanic, Middle Eastern, Mediterranean, and South Asian ancestry. It's a global condition.

Myth: People with SCD or SCT should avoid physical activity.

Fact: While extreme physical exertion can be a trigger for complications, regular, moderate exercise is encouraged as long as hydration is maintained and medical advice is followed.

Myth: If both parents carry the sickle cell trait, their child will definitely have SCD.

Fact: There's a 25% chance with each pregnancy that the child will inherit sickle cell disease if both parents carry the sickle cell trait, but there's also a 50% chance that the child will inherit just one trait (SCT) and a 25% chance that the child will inherit normal hemoglobin genes.

What is sickle cell trait?

gene 1 out of 2: 'A'



gene 2 out of 2: 'S'



Sickle cell trait (SCT) is a condition in which a person **inherits only one sickle cell gene** – a typo (mutation) in the DNA for the gene responsible for carrying oxygen within red blood cells (hemoglobin (hb)).

Sickle cell trait consists of one of each gene.

AS The genetic name or representation (genotype) for sickle cell trait is 'AS' or 'hb AS':

- 'A' represents the typical gene
- 'S' represents the mutated gene – the sickle cell gene

! Only two mutated genes (one from each parent) can cause the disease. This means **sickle cell trait is not a disease** and cannot become sickle cell disease.

Please note: Sickle cell trait is only one type of hemoglobin trait. There are other varying forms such as C-trait (AC), beta thalassemia trait and others.

5 Important Facts About Sickle Cell Trait

- 1** For every pregnancy by **two parents each with sickle cell trait**, there is a:
 - 25% chance of having a child born with sickle cell disease
 - 50% chance of having a child born with sickle cell trait
- 2** It is estimated that **1 in 12 African Americans have sickle cell trait**. Over 300 million people have sickle cell trait worldwide.
- 3** While sickle cell trait disproportionately affects individuals of black or African descent, people with sickle cell trait **make up various races and ethnicities**.
- 4** **Most people do not know they have sickle cell trait**. One study cites only 16% of Americans are aware of their sickle cell trait status.
- 5** **Sickle cell trait provides protection against the deadliest strain of malaria**, giving people with sickle cell trait a higher resistance against malaria.

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Sickle Cell Trait Triggers and Potential Complications

Triggers for Sickle Cell Trait

People with sickle cell trait may experience medical complications under these conditions or triggers:



dehydration



overexertion



increased pressure in atmosphere



low oxygen levels



high altitude

Potential Medical Complications Associated with Sickle Cell Trait

- **Rhabdomyolysis:** muscle breakdown
- **Hematuria:** blood in urine
- **Retinopathy:** eye complications
- **Diabetes misdiagnosis:** false hemoglobin A1C test
- **Renal medullary carcinoma:** a rare and aggressive kidney cancer

What's next?

I don't know if I have sickle cell trait.

Get tested. Sickle cell trait can impact your health, irrespective of race or ethnicity. Here are some tests that can help diagnose sickle cell trait:



Point-of-Care Testing

A portable test that can provide a sickle cell diagnosis in minutes. The types of point of care tests include: antibody tests and solubility tests.



Lab Testing

The most accurate test. Requires a blood draw and samples sent to a lab. The types of lab tests include: hemoglobin electrophoresis, isoelectric focusing, and genetic (DNA) sequencing.

I have sickle cell trait.

Be informed

Be aware of potential triggers/complications and monitor your health.

Visit a specialist if symptoms occur

Know the symptoms, and if they occur, follow up with a specialist immediately.

More educational resources at:



Ask Our Sickle Cell Trait Experts send questions to ask@sc101.org visit our website at sc101.org



Member Spotlight

As we embrace the start of a new school year, we want to take a moment to wish all students, teachers, and families a smooth transition back to the classroom. This time of year brings both excitement and challenges, and we're here to support you every step of the way.

In recognition of Sickle Cell Awareness Month, Women of Colors will host a Sickle Cell focused forum on September 20th at 7 p.m. via Facebook Live, where panelists will discuss the impact Sickle Cell Disease has had on their lives. This is an opportunity to learn more, ask questions, and engage with our community around this important health topic. We hope you'll join us online as we work together to spread awareness and support for those affected by sickle cell. Stay tuned for updates and more information, and don't forget to mark your calendars!



Evelyn McGovern
Cofounder/President



Is your loved one leading a destructive life? That doesn't mean your life has to be destroyed as well.

Stronger Together is here to help you cope. Join us at WOC for an addiction support group for family and friends of people struggling with addiction.

1st and 3rd Tuesday of every month. 6:30 - 8 PM
3057 Davenport, Saginaw, MI 48602

President's Corner

September is an important month for our organization as we focus on raising awareness about Sickle Cell Disease (SCD) and the Sickle Cell Trait (SCT). Sickle cell affects millions of people around the world, and right here in our community, many are living with the challenges of this condition. It is vital that we come together to support those affected and help educate others about the realities of SCD and SCT.

At Women of Colors, we are committed to doing our part, and we invite you to do the same. Whether it's by joining our upcoming Sickle Cell Forum on Facebook Live on September 20th, sharing resources, or simply engaging in conversations that foster understanding, your involvement makes a difference. Together, we can ensure that the voices of those affected by sickle cell are heard and that we continue advocating for better treatments and care. Thank you for being part of this mission and for your continued support.

