

Haematology Department

Living with Sickle Cell Disease – Fluids

Information for parents and carers

Introduction

This leaflet aims to provide you with general information about living with Sickle Cell Disease. If you are ever worried about your child please contact your Sickle Cell Team or take your child to the Accident and Emergency Department.

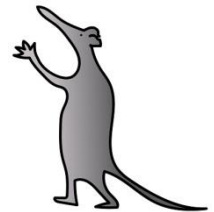
Why are fluids important for my child?

A lack of fluid or water in the body causes it to become dehydrated and this can trigger a sickle cell crisis. A lack of fluid makes the blood cells flow more slowly and become stickier and a crisis is more likely to occur. Fluids can help to thin out the blood.

As your child's kidneys are not able to concentrate urine effectively they will pass urine more frequently and this can also cause dehydration.

What are the signs of dehydration?

- Dry mouth.
- Increased thirst.
- Decreased urination / fewer wet nappies.
- Dark yellow urine.
- Lack of tears.
- Dry and wrinkled skin.
- Dark sunken eyes.
- Sunken fontanelle (the soft spot on the top of the head) in babies.
- Less alert and active than usual.



How can I prevent my child getting dehydrated?

To try to prevent you child getting dehydrated you should aim to:

- Ensure that your child drinks well throughout the day. Never leave your child for more than four hours without a drink.
- Ensure that extra fluids are given to your child when they are unwell, exercising and during hot weather
- If your child is unable to tolerate fluids, stops drinking, has diarrhoea or vomiting then you must bring your child to hospital for the doctor to see them.
- If your child is reluctant to drink then you can try giving them ice cubes, ice lollies, yoghurts, custard or soup as well as trying water, juice or milk.

What should I do if I think that my child is dehydrated?

If you think that your child may be dehydrated try to encourage them to drink. If they are unwilling or unable to drink or they are unwell you must bring them into Accident and Emergency Department for review by a doctor.

How is dehydration treated?

Dehydration is treated by giving the body fluid. If your child is unable to take fluid by mouth then they will have a drip (IV) put into a vein usually in their hand or arm, and given fluid intravenously until they are able to drink by mouth.

Further information

If you have any questions or want any further information please contact your Sick Cell Team on 0151 252 5070.

Useful websites

www.alderhey.co.uk

www.sicklecellsociety.co.uk



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This leaflet only gives general information. You must always discuss the individual treatment of your child with the appropriate member of staff. Do not rely on this leaflet alone for information about your child's treatment.

This information can be made available in other languages and formats if requested.

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Review Date: April 2024

PIAG: 0062

