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Haematology Department

**Sickle Cell Crisis – Haemolytic Crisis**

Information for parents and carers

**Introduction**

This leaflet aims to provide you with general information about the signs and symptoms your child may have when they are having a sickle cell crisis. If you are ever worried about your child please contact your Sickle Cell Team or take your child to the Accident and Emergency Department.

**What is a haemolytic crisis?**

A haemolytic crisis is where the red blood cells are destroyed faster than normal. This causes your child's haemoglobin to drop rapidly. Children with sickle cell disease are anaemic so a further drop in their haemoglobin can cause severe and life-threatening anaemia.

**What causes a haemolytic crisis*?***

A haemolytic crisis can be caused by infections, a condition called G6PD deficiency or a sickle cell crisis.

**What are the signs and symptoms of a haemolytic crisis?**

* ****Temperature
* Headaches
* Paleness
* Tiredness
* Increased breathlessness
* Yellow eyes or skin
* Dark urine

**What should I do if I notice any of these symptoms?**

If you notice any of the above symptoms bring your child to the hospital for review. Your child will have a blood test to see if they are anaemic and how many new red blood cells they are making.

**Is a haemolytic crisis serious?**

An extremely low haemoglobin can cause complications for your child. They can go into shock or develop heart failure. If you notice any signs of a haemolytic crisis you should bring your child to hospital immediately.

**How is a haemolytic crisis treated?**

If your child is more anaemic than normal and/or they are unwell they will be admitted to hospital for observation. They may require a blood transfusion. If your child is unwell they will also have intravenous (IV) fluids and pain medicines if needed.

**What will happen once my child goes home?**

Once your child is discharged we will usually bring them back to the hospital for review in two to three days’ time. This will be to check their haemoglobin and make sure that it hasn't dropped again.

**Will my child get a haemolytic crisis again?**

Your child can get a haemolytic crisis more than once. If you notice your child having the same symptoms bring them to the hospital for a blood test and to be seen by a doctor.

**Further information**

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

**Useful websites**

[www.alderhey.co.uk](http://www.alderhey.co.uk)

[www.sicklecellsociety.co.uk](http://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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