

Steps to Better Heart Health for People with Sickle Cell Disease



Accessible link: <https://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/sicklecell/betterhealthtoolkit/index.html>

People with sickle cell disease (SCD) are at greater risk than the general population for high blood pressure. High blood pressure often increases the workload of the heart and blood vessels, which can cause complications. Below are steps you can take for better heart health.

Know your numbers. Ask your provider about your blood pressure reading at each visit. Keep track of this information and talk to your provider if your blood pressure reading is above 120/80 mm Hg.

If your blood pressure is higher than 120/80 mm Hg, your provider will likely prescribe blood pressure medicine to lower your risk for complications.

Learn more about safe use of medicines here: www.cdc.gov/SCD/medicines

Learn more about measuring your blood pressure here: www.cdc.gov/BP/measure

If you have high blood pressure, you can help lower it by doing the following:



Be physically active. Adults should get 30 minutes of exercise, such as brisk walking or bicycling, 5 days a week. Children and adolescents should get 1 hour of physical activity every day.

Learn more ways to be physically active here: www.cdc.gov/physicalactivity



Eat healthy. Talk with your healthcare team about eating a variety of foods rich in potassium, fiber, and protein, and low in salt (sodium) and saturated fat.

Learn more about healthy eating and nutrition here: www.cdc.gov/nutrition



Quit smoking. Smoking raises your blood pressure and puts you at higher risk for heart attack and stroke. Your doctor can suggest ways to help you quit.

Learn more about tobacco use and quitting here: www.cdc.gov/tobacco



Limit how much alcohol you drink. The Dietary Guidelines for Americans recommend up to 1 drink per day for women and up to 2 drinks per day for men.

Learn more here: www.cdc.gov/alcohol



Get enough sleep. Make sure to get 7 hours of sleep or more every night.

Learn how to get better sleep here: www.cdc.gov/sleep

Visit the “Sickle Cell Disease: Steps to Better Health” toolkit available here: www.cdc.gov/SCD/betterhealth

Source: Liem RI, Lanzkron S, D Coates T, DeCastro L, Desai AA, Ataga KI, et. al. American Society of Hematology 2019 guidelines for sickle cell disease: cardiopulmonary and kidney disease. *Blood Adv.* 2019 Dec 10;3(23):3867-3897.



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