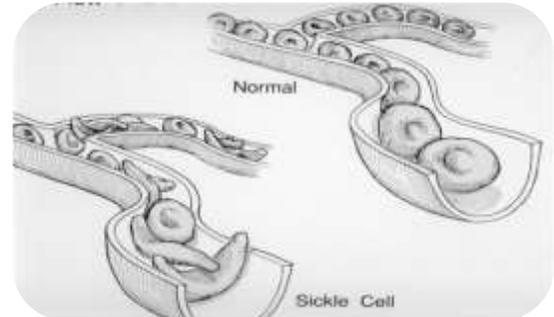


## Sickle Cell Disease: Acute Chest Syndrome

### What is acute chest syndrome?

Acute chest syndrome occurs when the red blood cells sickle and stick together in the lungs. This does not let enough blood and oxygen get to the lungs. This can cause tissue damage. Acute chest syndrome may be triggered by a lung infection such as pneumonia. It may also be caused by asthma that is not controlled. It can occur before, during or after a sickle cell pain episode.



### What are the symptoms?



There may be one or more of these symptoms:

- Fast breathing or trouble breathing.
- Chest, stomach (abdomen) or back pain along with the breathing problems.
- Fever.
- Congested cough.

**If any of these symptoms occur go to the Emergency room within one hour.**

### What happens in the hospital?

- Oxygen and antibiotics will most likely be given.
- A sickle cell doctor, called a hematologist may talk with you about a blood transfusion. This may help breathing to get better.
- Pain medicine will be given.
- It is important to get out of bed several times a day to sit in a chair or walk. This will help with deep breathing.

**ALERT:** Call the doctor, nurse, or the Sickle Cell Center if you have any concerns or if there are special health care needs not covered by this information.

**Sickle Cell Center:** (414) 257-1232, Monday – Friday, 8:00 AM – 4:30 PM. **Ask to talk with a nurse.**

**After hours, weekends or holidays,** call (414) 266-2000 and ask for the hematologist on call.

**This teaching sheet is meant to help you care for yourself or child. It does not take the place of medical care. Talk with your healthcare provider for diagnosis, treatment, and follow-up.**