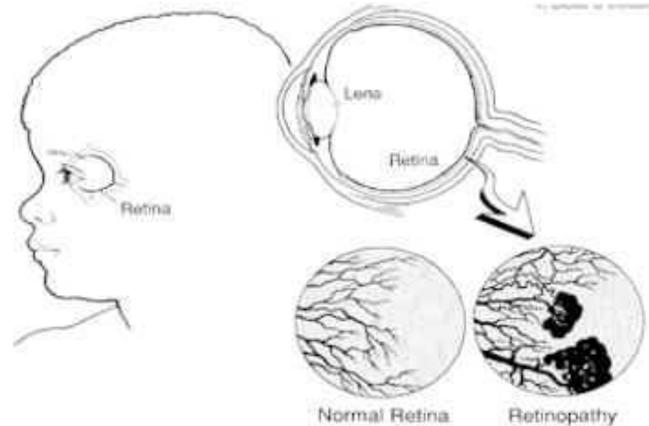


## Sickle Cell Disease: Retinopathy

### What is sickle cell retinopathy?

The retina is a lining in the back of the eye that helps us see. Sickle cell retinopathy occurs when the sickled red blood cells block the tiny blood vessels in the back of the eyes. This can damage the retina, which can lead to vision problems.

Permanent eye damage can occur if retinopathy is not caught in time. It is most common with Hemoglobin SC Disease, but it can occur with the other forms of Sickle Cell Disease.



### What are the symptoms?

- Often there are no symptoms in the early stages of retinopathy.
- Later there may be:
  - Vision problems.
  - Times it seems like something is floating in the eyes.

### What should be done if there are vision problems?

- Call the Sickle Cell Center with any vision problems.
- A special eye doctor called an ophthalmologist will need to be seen. This doctor will do a special eye exam to look for retinopathy.
- It is important to tell the eye doctor about the Sickle Cell Disease.

If there are no vision problems, an eye doctor should still be seen on a regular basis. The sickle cell doctors and nurses will talk with you about how often to do this.

**ALERT:** Call the doctor, nurse, or the Sickle Cell Center if you have any concerns or if your there are:

- Any problems seeing.
- 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 your child. It does not take the place of medical care. Talk with your healthcare provider for diagnosis, treatment, and follow-up.**