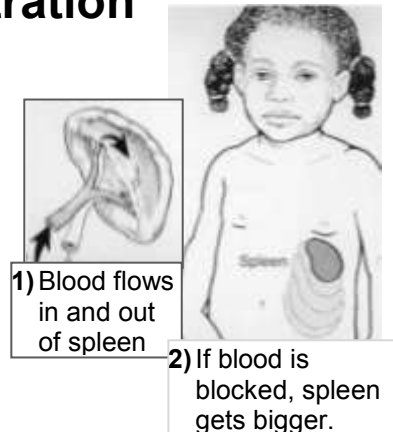


Sickle Cell Disease: Splenic Sequestration

What is splenic sequestration?

The spleen is a small organ on the left side of the body under the rib cage. Normally you cannot feel it. Blood goes in and out of the spleen. When blood gets trapped in the spleen, the spleen gets bigger. This is called splenic sequestration. It will cause your child's red blood cell level to be lower.



What are the symptoms of a spleen problem?

- Being crabby, weak or looking pale.
- There may be pain on the left side.
- The spleen will be bigger. You will be shown how to feel for the spleen every day so that you know how it normally feels. If sick or having stomach pain, you should feel for the spleen.

If you/your child are weak, pale and have a large stomach or you can feel the spleen, go to the Emergency Department right away or call 911.

What is splenomegaly?

Sometimes, an enlarged spleen is called a splenomegaly. It occurs slowly when the spleen gets bigger with very little change in the blood counts. It is not the same as splenic sequestration. There may also be occasional stomach pain. This must be watched carefully and you will need to feel the spleen so that you can tell when it is getting bigger.

What happens in the hospital?

- Blood will be drawn and an IV started.
- A sickle cell doctor called a hematologist may talk with you about a blood transfusion. This will increase blood counts to help make the spleen smaller.
- Pain medicine will be given if needed.

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.

If you/your child are weak, pale, have a large stomach or you can feel the spleen, go the Emergency Department right away. Tell the staff about the Sickle Cell Disease.

Sickle Cell Center. Call (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. 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.