



Sickle Cell Disease Toolkit for Schools 2024

Although it is unknown how many students in Louisiana have sickle cell disease, approximately 80 infants are born each year with sickle cell, and there are about 3,000 people in the Louisiana Medicaid program living with the disease. Students who have sickle cell disease are more at risk for psychological and psychosocial complications as a result of the disease because symptoms and complications can cause absenteeism from school and deterioration in school performance. Children with SCD are also at higher risk of learning difficulties.

But there are many (small)things that the school community can do to help a student living with sickle cell be more successful in school. This toolkit provides information about sickle cell disease. School communities can make a difference in the lives of students with sickle cell disease by understanding key facts about the disease, how to watch out for symptoms, and how to provide special accommodations.

KEY MESSAGES

- Sickle cell disease is an inherited disease that involves red blood cells and causes them to become hard and sticky and look C-shaped instead of round (like a sickle.) In small blood vessels, the sickle-shaped cells get stuck and cause blood flow blockages. This can cause pain and other serious complications. Patients affected by the disease have a reduced number of red blood cells, which results in anemia and fatigue.
- School administrators, teachers, and school staff can play an active role to ensure a student with sickle cell can succeed in the classroom with the proper understanding of the disease.
- School staff are encouraged to know their students with sickle cell and strive to create the most appropriate learning environment that supports the needs of these students.
- Children with sickle cell disease have symptoms that can make it difficult to concentrate in school and can cause more absences than some students
- Some symptoms include pain, fatigue, temperature sensitivity, dehydration, and the need to frequently use the restrooms.
- The school community should be aware of other, more serious complications, such as stroke. Teachers, in particular, are well-positioned to observe stroke symptoms because there is often a noticeable decline in performance or behavior.
- Absences are more prevalent among students with sickle cell disease due to attending clinic, pain crises, or hospitalizations.
- Children with sickle cell anemia, therefore, may require extra help or adaptations to the usual school routine.
- Sickle cell disease primarily affects African-Americans and people of Hispanic descent. As a group, people with SCD experience worse health outcomes compared to other diseases and have access to fewer health resources.

TOOLKIT ASSETS

Talking points for administrators and school-based health center leaders

Recommended use: Staff meetings, staff retreats, professional day programming

This one-pager was created to assist high-level administrators in informing faculty and staff of the importance of learning more about sickle cell disease, how it affects students, and what materials are available in the toolkit.

- [Talking points for administrators and school-based health center leaders](#)

Poster/handout

Recommended use:

- Poster: Post in areas frequented by staff, such as administrative offices, school-based health centers, staff meeting rooms, teacher/staff break areas
- Handout: Print out a double-sided page to include the FAQ on the back

The poster/handout can be used as a “quick glance” primer on sickle cell disease, informing all staff members in the school community of the key symptoms and responses that will help students be successful.

- [8x11 poster \(small\)](#)
- [11x17 poster \(large\)](#)
- [Handout \(print double-sided\)](#)

Teachers' Guide to Students with SCD


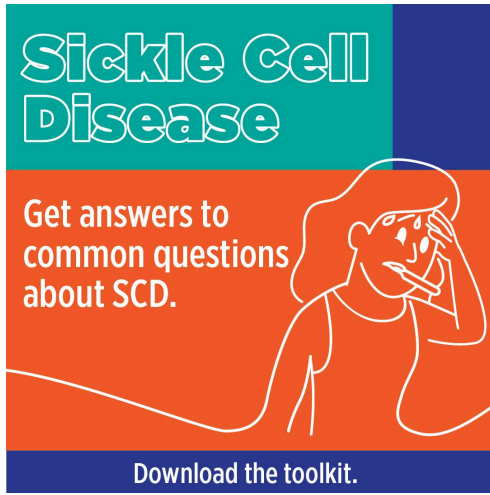

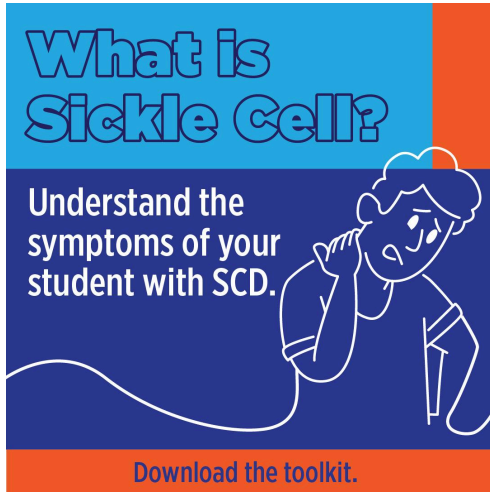

This double-sided two-pager helps teachers navigate an Individualized Accommodations Plan, providing tips and strategies for responding to items that may appear on an IAP.

- *Recommended use:* Make available to all teachers to keep in the classroom for reference. It may also be helpful for staff who interact with students where physical exertion may be a factor, such as recess, or where temperature changes may be a factor, such as on buses.
- [Teacher's Guide to Students with SCD](#)

RESOURCES

- The CDC has compiled stories from people directly affected by Sickle Cell Disease, highlighting the impact that identification, treatment, and resources can have on real people. Read their stories [here](#).
- [Addressing Sickle Cell Disease: A Strategic Plan and Blueprint](#) from the National Academies, which examines the epidemiology, health outcomes, genetic implications, and societal factors associated with SCD and Sickle Cell Trait (SCT).
- [Sickle Cell Clinics and Foundations in Louisiana](#)
- [Sickle Cell Disease Association of America](#)

SUGGESTED SOCIAL MEDIA CONTENT:

Social Media Channel	Caption	Image
	<p><i>Did you know:</i> Students with sickle cell disease (SCD) can struggle with school because symptoms can cause absenteeism and deterioration in school performance? Learn how you can help students with SCD with a new toolkit specially designed for the school community: ldh.la.gov/page/sickle-cell</p>	
	<p>About 80 infants each year are born with sickle cell disease, an inherited trait that affects mostly African-American and Hispanic residents in Louisiana. You can learn more about the symptoms and challenges SCD students face by downloading the new SCD toolkit for schools at ldh.la.gov/page/sickle-cell</p>	
	<p>You can help students with SCD have a successful school experience by knowing just a few quick tips, like recognizing painful episodes, fatigue and temperature sensitivity. Learn more about how SCD affects students and how your school community can help by downloading our toolkit: ldh.la.gov/page/sickle-cell</p>	