

WHAT SHOULD I DO IF I HAVE A PAINFUL CRISIS?

The basic objectives for managing a sickle cell pain crisis are control of pain and rehydration by fluid administration. Parents of children with sickle cell disease should insist on aggressive pain relief treatment for their child. Depending on the severity of the pain, treatment options vary from home management to hospitalization. Symptoms of pain crisis can include:

- Bone pain crisis – pain, swelling of hands and feet in young children; long bones and back in older children; fever
- Abdominal pain crisis – abdominal distention, difficulty breathing

Treatment of a typical pain episode should start by drinking more water, lying down and resting. Take a warm bath, use a warming pad and use distractions such as music or relaxation techniques. If your health care provider has given you pain medications to use, start taking it as prescribed. The different kinds of pain medications that can be used include acetaminophen (Tylenol), anti-inflammatory agents (Advil, Naproxen) and narcotics (codeine, morphine, hydromorphone). These different pain medications work in different ways and sometimes combining them can help to better alleviate pain.

If home treatment *fails* or a *warning sign*, such as fever, weakness, atypical pain (new or different pain), headache, chest pain, or abdominal pain, is present, go to the emergency room.