

September is National Sickle Cell Awareness Month, designed by Congress to help focus attention on the need for research and treatment of sickle cell disease. [The Sickle Cell Disease Association of America \(SCDAA\)](#), recognizes this month by increasing awareness about the disease by engaging elected officials for proclamations, providing resources and education and lighting public spaces, buildings and landmarks in red.

The SCDAA's mission is to advocate for people affected by sickle cell conditions and empower community-based organizations to maximize quality of life and raise public consciousness while advancing the search for a universal cure.

## What is Sickle Cell Disease?

According to [The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention \(CDC\)](#), sickle cell disease (SCD) is a group of inherited red blood cell disorders. Healthy red blood cells are round, and they move through small blood vessels to carry oxygen to all parts of the body. In someone who has SCD, the red blood cells become hard and sticky and look like a C-shaped farm tool called a "sickle". The sickle cells die early, which causes a constant shortage of red blood cells. Also, when they travel through small blood vessels, they get stuck and clog the blood flow. This can cause pain and other serious problems such as infection, acute chest syndrome and stroke. SCD is a genetic condition that is present at birth. It is inherited when a child receives two sickle cell genes – one from each parent. The only cure for SCD is bone marrow or stem cell transplant.

## Facts & Figures

Sickle cell has many faces – click on this [video](#) to learn more. According to the CDC, it is estimated that:

- SCD affects approximately **100,000 Americans**.
- SCD occurs among about **1 out of every 365 Black or African-American births**.
- SCD occurs among about **1 out of every 16,300 Hispanic-American births**.
- About **1 in 13 Black or African-American babies** are born with the sickle cell trait.

## Resources & Information

- [The Centers for Disease Control & Prevention](#)
- [Sickle Cell Disease Associate of America, Inc](#)
- [U.S. Department of Health and Human Services/Office of Minority Health](#)
- [Cigna](#) members
- [Kaiser Permanente](#) members