

Penicillin

What is penicillin?

Penicillin is an antibiotic that all children with sickle cell disease start taking as soon as they are diagnosed. Sickled red blood cells can have a negative impact on the spleen, which is an important organ in your body that helps to fight infection. Because the spleen can be damaged by sickle cell disease early in life, children with sickle cell disease are at an increased risk of serious bacterial infection.

What to know:

- Penicillin is taken twice a day starting within the first 1-2 months of life until 5 years of age.
- Penicillin has been shown to reduce (but not prevent) the risk of infection. It is still important to call your sickle cell team if your child develops a fever (see the page on Infection in the Pain and Treatment section).



Tips for penicillin:

- Work with your pharmacy regarding penicillin prescription. One bottle expires every 2 weeks and needs to be refrigerated.
- Ask to speak to a psychologist or child life specialist on your care team if you are having problems getting your child to take medicine.

