

# Sickle cell disease: Aplastic crisis

## What is aplastic crisis?

Aplastic crisis means the body has stopped making red blood cells. It is caused by a common cold virus called Parvovirus B19. This virus causes the body to stop making red blood cells for about 7 to 10 days. This will cause blood counts to drop quickly. The virus can cause serious problems for a person with sickle cell disease.

## What are the symptoms?

There may be one or more of these symptoms:

- A recent cold.
- Feeling more tired than normal.
- Wanting to sleep more.
- Feeling like they are going to pass out.
- A headache.
- Looks pale. Look at the palms of the hands or lips to check for paleness.

If any of these symptoms present, go to the Emergency Department. A doctor must be seen and blood must be drawn right away.



## What will happen in the hospital?

- Blood will be drawn.
- A sickle cell doctor, called a hematologist may talk with you about a blood transfusion.
- This virus can easily spread to others. The patient cannot leave the room. This is called isolation.

Hand washing is very important to stop the spread of infection to others.

**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.

**Sickle Cell Center:** (414) 266-2420, Monday – Friday, 8:00 AM – 4:30 PM. **Ask to talk with a nurse.**

**After hours, weekends or holidays,** call (414) 266-2000 and ask for the hematologist on call.

**This sheet was created to help you care for your child or family member. It does not take the place of medical care. Talk with your healthcare provider for diagnosis, treatment and follow-up.**