



# Sickle Cell Facts

## What Is Sickle Cell Disease?

Sickle cell disease is an inherited blood disorder caused by a genetic defect that causes the production of misshapen or sickled red blood cells.

## Who Is Affected By Sickle Cell Disease?

- It is estimated that SCD affects 90,000 to 100,000 people in the United States, mainly Blacks or African Americans.
- The disease occurs among about 1 of every 500 Black or African American births and among about 1 out of every 36,000 Hispanic American births.
- SCD affects millions of people throughout the world and is particularly common among those whose ancestors come from sub-Saharan Africa; regions in the Western Hemisphere (South America, the Caribbean, and Central America); Saudi Arabia; India; and Mediterranean countries such as Turkey, Greece, and Italy.

## Common Symptoms

**Pain Episode or Crisis:** caused by blockages in arteries and blood veins.

**Hand-Foot Syndrome:** Swelling in the hands and feet, often along with a fever.

**Sickle Cell Retinopathy:** SCD can affect the blood vessels in the eye and lead to long term damage.

**Acute Chest Syndrome (ACS):** Blockage of the flow of blood to the lungs.

**Stroke:** Sickled cells can clog blood flow to the brain causing a stroke.