



## Nutrition excerpts from “Hope and Destiny Jr” Hilton Publishing 2019

### TIPS FOR KEEPING YOUR BODY HEALTHY

People with sickle cell must drink plenty of fluids. Water is the best choice; milk or juice is next best. Do not take in too much coffee, tea or caffeinated drinks—these drinks don't help your body retain as much water, which can cause you to become dehydrated more easily. Plus, too many sugar carbonated soft drinks are bad for your teeth.

Folic acid, which is in the B-vitamin group, can help people with sickle cell disease make red blood cells and might also help keep their blood vessels healthier. Folic acid is commonly prescribed for people with sickle cell, especially for people with higher red blood cell production, as shown by higher counts of very young red cells (reticulocyte counts). Foods that contain high amounts of folic acid include: leafy greens such as spinach, citrus fruits, eggs, broccoli, kidney beans, and lentils.

A balanced healthy diet is a good idea for a person with sickle cell disease.

Eat plenty of fruits and vegetables along with some meat or other protein.

The “heart-healthy” food choices that are high in antioxidants and omega-3 fatty acids (fish oil) are good for sickle cell disease. If you are looking for a snack, choose a fruit or vegetable instead of packaged snack foods that are sugary or fried. A handful of nuts can be a great snack too.

**Scientists are studying whether nutritional supplements will help people with sickle cell disease. Right now, these studies have not provided solid answers.**

#### THIRSTY?

The simple act of consuming extra water can dramatically delay the sickling effect. Even a little bit of water can make a tremendous difference. Drinking 10% more water, for example, can slow down sickling by 1,700%!

It is especially important for children with sickle cell to drink plenty of water, because kidneys—along with all other organs—are damaged by sickle cells. Once damaged, the kidneys cannot help the body retain water very well.

Loss of water through urine continues at a high rate all day and all night, so it is very easy for people with sickle cell to quickly become dehydrated if they do not drink enough to replace the lost fluids.

The best fluid for people with sickle cell is water. When the sickle red blood cells get dry, they sickle. When sickle red blood cells have more water, they stay more flexible. That keeps the blood flowing better. When you drink more water, you're helping your body prevent sickle cells from getting stuck and causing pain.

Other fluids like juice, milk, soup and fruit are also fine to add variation, as are popsicles. Too many sugary carbonated drinks like soda can cause cavities. Drinks with caffeine (like soda,



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coffee and energy drinks), alcohol, or theophylline (the specific chemical which is found in tea) make the kidney release more water into the urine. Try to limit these drinks to no more than two glasses a day.

The amount of water you need to drink depends on your size. What pediatricians call the maintenance rate of fluids is the minimum you need to avoid dehydration. The chart below indicates how much an individual child should drink. Drinking more than the amount shown is fine. Drinking even more liquids may be necessary when you are ill, exercising, or hot. When you are having sickle cell pain, make sure that you drink at least the higher of the recommended amounts

**Recommended Daily Water Consumption**

Metric		English	
Body weight (kilograms)	Range per day (liters)	Body weight (pounds)	Range per day (8-ounce cups)
5	0.5 to 0.7	10	2 to 3
10	1.0 to 1.4	25	4 to 6
15	1.2 to 1.8	30	5 to 8
20	1.4 to 2.2	45	6 to 9
25	1.5 to 2.3	55	7 to 10
30	1.7 to 2.5	75	8 to 11
35	1.8 to 2.7	100	9 to 13
45	2.0 to 3.0	130	10 to 15
55	2.3 to 3.4	150	11 to 17
65	2.5 to 3.8	175	12 to 18
75	2.8 to 4.1		