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## ...your cool tips on sickle-cell disease

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Sickle-cell Inheritance

Sickle-cell Crisis

Signs & Symptoms

Treatment

When to call the doctor

What causes crises?

Travelling tips

Personal Care

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### Travelling with Sickle-Cell Disease

There is no reason why people with sickle cell disease cannot travel, both for business and pleasure.

However, you should be well prepared and need to be aware that there are some particular risks associated with air travel for people with sickle cell disease. The risks are mainly due to:

- Exhaustion after a long flight.
- Low oxygen concentrations at high altitude.
- Dehydration as the result of not drinking enough water on the flight, or from drinking tea, coffee or alcohol during the flight.
- Sitting in a your seat for a long time results in poor blood circulation.

#### Advance planning for your journey

- Visit a travel clinic or talk to a medical officer with knowledge of sickle cell disease when planning your trip.
- Get a summary of your healthcare information so that you can pass it to a hospital in case you need treatment abroad.
- Ensure you have been prescribed anti-malarials by your doctor if your destination is a risk area for malaria, and that you have started the course as advised by your doctor.
- Research where you are travelling to and ensure you have had the vaccines required for that area or country (if necessary), and also to know how to access healthcare and where it is located.
- Ensure you have bought travel insurance to cover you during your trip (this can be expensive).

#### Below are a few things to do before you travel.

- Travel when you are free from infection and/or crisis.
- Get a good night's sleep on the night before your departure.
- Drink plenty of water and non-alcoholic drinks prior to and during your flight, and continue to do this for a few days after your arrival.
- Get up and stretch your legs during the flight; walk up and down the aisle a few times to improve your circulation.
- Avoid alcohol, tea and coffee before travel as it can dehydrate you.
- Watch out for any unusual symptoms of pain or breathlessness and inform the cabin crew immediately if you feel unwell.
- Check with your airline if they can reserve enough oxygen on board your flight just in case you need it.
- Avoid smoking.

[CLICK HERE TO DOWNLOAD A SICKLE-CELL TRAVEL CHECKLIST](#)

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