MYTH

You can "catch" Sickle Cell Anemia from someone who has it.

TRUTH

No, a person cannot "catch" Sickle Cell Anemia from another person. Sickle Cell Anemia is a genetic condition that is inherited when a person receives two sickle cell genes - one from each parent. A person can also inherit a sickle cell gene from one parent and a different kind of abnormal gene from the other parent and inherit a different form of sickle cell disease, such as hemoglobin SC disease or hemoglobin S beta thalassemia. A person who inherits only one sickle cell gene and a normal gene from the other parent will inherit the sickle cell trait, but not the sickle cell disease.

MYTH

Women with Sickle Cell Anemia cannot have a healthy pregnancy.

TRUTH

Yes, they can. However, women with Sickle Cell Anemia are more likely to have complications during pregnancy that can affect their health and the health of their unborn baby. During pregnancy, the disease can become more severe and pain episodes can occur more frequently. Complications can include among others, miscarriage, preterm labor, and a low birth-weight baby. However, with early and regular prenatal care and careful monitoring, women with sickle cell disease can have a healthy pregnancy. Tests can also be performed to determine if the baby will have sickle cell disease, sickle cell trait, or neither.

MYTH

Sickle Cell Anemia only affects African Americans.

TRUTH

Sickle Cell Anemia affects millions of people throughout the world and is most common in people whose families are from Africa, South or Central America, Caribbean islands, and Mediterranean countries such as Turkey, Greece, and Italy, India, and Saudi Arabia.

MYTH

People with Sickle Cell Anemia can't have a normal, productive life.

TRUTH

Yes, they can. They can have families, work, and enjoy hobbies and recreational activities just like everyone else. However, like all people with chronic diseases, individuals with sickle cell can best manage their health with a comprehensive, multi-disciplinary program of care and a strong, extended support system. Treatments are improving and people with Sickle Cell Anemia are living longer and more productive lives.