

# Living with sickle cell anemia

[Health & Medicine](#), [Disease](#)



\n[toc title="Table of Contents"]\n

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1. [How I Got to Know That I Have Sickle Cell](#) \n \t
2. [The Treatment of My Sister](#) \n \t
3. [Sickle Cell Anemia and Its Types](#) \n \t
4. [Bone Marrow Transplant](#) \n \t
5. [Coping with the Disease](#) \n \t
6. [Conclusion](#) \n

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## **How I Got to Know That I Have Sickle Cell**

When I was young, I was living a care-free life. I was playing and running around being curious about the world as any other child. I thought I was just like any normal child until I was in third grade when I had a stroke. It was Valentine's Day and my class was preparing to get ready for our Valentine's party. Before the party, my class and I was going to lunch when all of a sudden, I couldn't walk or stand up straight. I thought my legs were asleep because I was sitting down for a long time. My teacher knew something was wrong and she rushed me to the school nurse. The nurse contacted my parents and the next thing I know, I was being rushed to Children's Healthcare of Atlanta where I learned that I have Sickle Cell. After the incident, I started to keep going to Children's to get blood transfusions every month for fourteen years, but I stopped getting them last year.

## **The Treatment of My Sister**

I have four siblings, a brother, and three sisters. Out of my siblings, my brother got the Sickle Cell trait and two of my sisters doesn't have the trait nor the disorder, but my baby sister Summer was born with Sickle Cell just like me. Summer wasn't as lucky as me with her Sickle Cell. She was always in a lot of pain and she was always in and out of hospitals because her pain was unbearable. It got to the point where the doctors told my parents about the bone marrow transplant, which is a cure for Sickle Cell. After some long thinking, my parents agreed to do it.

The process was long to get my sister prepared for her to be cured. First, the doctors had to find a perfect match for my sister, and lucky for us one of my sisters who did not have anything, whose name is Tatyanna, was a perfect match. Once they found a match, Summer and Tatyanna had doctor appointments every two months for a year. When it was almost time for the operation, the doctors told my parents that Summer would be in the hospital for five months or until she gets better.

When Summer was emitted into the hospital, she was going through chemotherapy. It was a tough time for her because she was losing her hair and she was not feeling well during that period. Once she was done with the chemotherapy, then it was time for the transplant. My sister Tatyanna donated some of her bone marrow to Summer, it was a success, and everything was normal. It wasn't until after the transplant where things were going south for my family. Summer was in even more pain then before. She stopped eating, and she was having trouble breathing. It scared my family

because we did not know what was going on. A few months go by, and Summer was back in good conditions. Once the five months was gone and the doctors claimed that summer was cleared to go back home. Its been about three years since she was in the hospital, and she is healthy and cured of Sickle Cell.

## **Sickle Cell Anemia and Its Types**

Now that I told you about our story, let me tell you more about the Sickle cell disease. Sickle cell disease is a condition where red blood cells are in a different shape than what they supposed to be. They are more in a crescent moon shape, and because of them being in a crescent shape they get stuck together blocking blood vessels which causes pain (Miller, 2018). Sickle cell is inherited, you receive it when both or only one of your parents have the trait. You do not get it at a certain age, you are born with it. Sickle cell is not contagious, you can not get it from other people.

There are different types of Sickle cell disease. According to the book, Hope and Destiny Jr., written by Hsu, Brandalise, and Rodrigues, stated that the most common type of Sickle cell is type SS. This type is inherited from both parents which makes the production of only abnormal sickle hemoglobin (pg. 5, para. 1). This is the type that I got and what my sister had before she was cured. Another type of Sickle cell that the book mention is SC, which is called “ SC disease”. This type is quite common, for someone to get this type of sickle cell one of their parents have to pass down the gene of the sickle hemoglobin, while the other parent passes down the gene for the abnormal

C type of hemoglobin (pg. 5, para. 2). There are other types of sickle cell that are rare like SO, SD, and others. (pg. 5, para. 5).

## **Bone Marrow Transplant**

At the beginning of my speech, I told you about how my baby sister Summer was cured by getting the bone marrow transplant. The bone marrow is the only cure for sickle cell, so far. According to Jennifer Thomas at ABC News, the bone marrow transplant cured nine out of ten adults with sickle cell (para. 1). She then stated that the transplant is not generally reserved for resilient children who haven't suffered much from sickle cell (para. 3). A good example of that is my sister and me, the doctors recommended for my sister to get the transplant instead of me because she was young, and her recovery would be quicker than it would be for me. Speaking from personal experience, the things that my sister went through, like the chemotherapy, she did a wonderful speedy recovery. I do not think it would work out like that for me because I've been through more things than what she been through.

## **Coping with the Disease**

For the ones that weren't lucky enough to get the bone marrow transplant, we must cope with our sickle cell. In the Sickle Cell Anemia News, it states that the most common thing that people with sickle cell deal with is pain (para. 3). It also states that some sickle cell patients use heat pads and warm baths to cope with the pain (para. 6). I also use heat to help with my pain. I take medicine that my doctor prescribes for me when I'm in pain. I also like to dance my pain away. In my opinion, getting active is a good way

to relieve pain. I also drink a tremendous amount of water, so I won't be dehydrated.

## **Conclusion**

In conclusion, I am living my best life with sickle cell, even through the pain. I smile and laugh and try to be the best me. I hope that I taught all of you something new with my speech.