

THE AMERICAN RED CROSS'S ROLE **National Sickle Cell Awareness Month**

September 12, 2025

Ice Breaker: Has your school year begun? If so, what has been the highlight of the semester so far?





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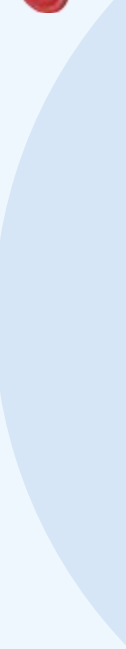
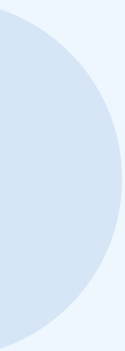
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What is Sickle Cell Disease?



What is Sickle Cell Disease?

Sickle cell disease is a genetic blood disorder present at birth and characterized by the production of abnormal hemoglobin, leading to misshapen red blood cells that can cause severe pain and various health complications.

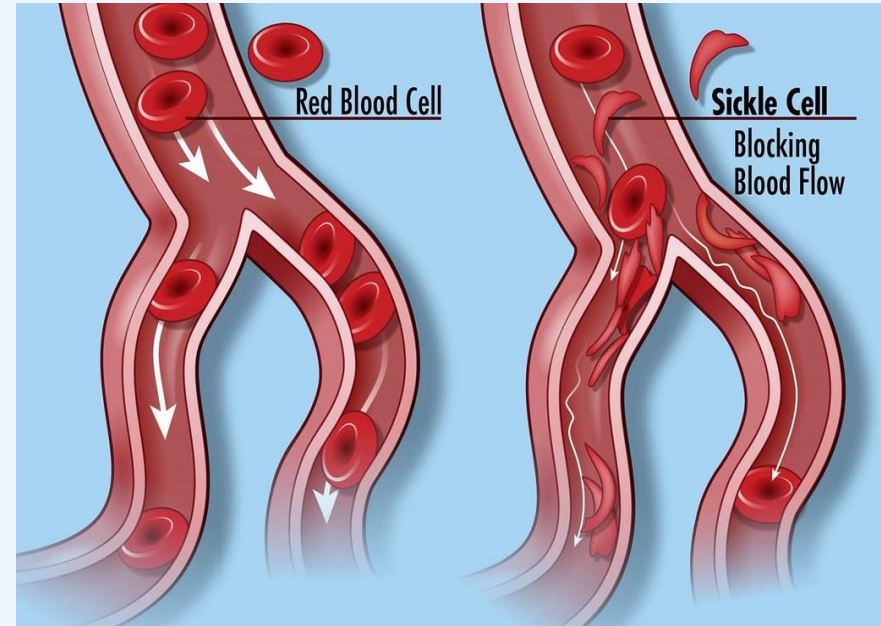


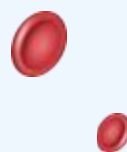
- Sickled cells break apart early → causes anemia
 - They can also block blood flow, leading to: severe pain (“crises”), fatigue, organ damage, or stroke
 - Managed through regular blood transfusions, medications, or in some cases bone marrow transplants
 - Affects about 100,000 people in the U.S., especially in Black, African American & Latino communities
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The Science Behind Sickle Cell Disease

- People with sickle cell disease have red blood cells that contain mostly hemoglobin S, an abnormal hemoglobin type
- These red blood cells containing hemoglobin S are stiff, distorted in shape (like a sickle) and sometimes block small blood vessels





How Does Race and Ethnicity Affect Blood

Blood types fall into four major groups: A, B, AB, and O. Some patients require an even closer match than the main blood types.

If a patient receives a transfusion that is not a close match, they may form antibodies.

Individuals who receive frequent blood transfusions, such as patients with sickle cell disease, need to receive the most compatible match possible.

- Antigens are a substance on red blood cells that help determine blood type.
 - There are more than 600 known antigens, and some are unique to specific racial and ethnic groups.
 - One in 3 African American blood donors is a match for a patient with sickle cell disease.
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The Crucial Need for Blood Donations

- More than 100,000 people in the United States have sickle cell disease
- Sickle cell disease affects 1 out of every 365 Black or African American births
- People with sickle cell disease may need as many as 100 units of blood each year
- Blood donations could help alleviate the symptoms of someone living with sickle cell disease, potentially even saving their life



Robin's sickle cell disease story: 'With the help of blood transfusions, I'm still here'



ROBIN NEWSOME
Suffers from Sickle Cell Disease

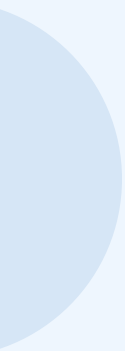
The Red Cross Commitment

The Red Cross Sickle Cell Initiative has **inspired more than 140,000 first-time African American donors** to roll up a sleeve, strengthening the blood supply for patients in need and allowing them to survive and thrive.

The initiative has also provided more than **300,000 sickle cell trait screenings** to donors who self-identified as African American, Black or multiracial to increase sickle cell trait awareness

Invested \$205,000 in future leaders through the Red Cross Sickle Cell Fighter High School Scholarship Program, awarding \$5,000 scholarships to 41 students who demonstrated outstanding commitment to helping patients with sickle cell disease

Collected over 7,300 pints of lifesaving blood at more than 320 blood drives on HBCU campuses through the Red Cross HBCU Ambassador Program, creating a powerful legacy of collaboration that has strengthened communities



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How Youth Can Get Involved

Become a Blood Donor Ambassador

Why our Blood Donor Ambassadors are so Important?

As a volunteer donor ambassador, you'll ensure every blood donor has a wonderful experience from start to finish. Greet donors with a warm smile, assist them with checking in, and express heartfelt thanks for their generous donation. You'll be a key part of our Biomedical Services team, making a real difference every day. Each shift you take helps save lives.



Become a Blood Donor Ambassador



RESPONSIBILITIES:

1. Guide donors smoothly through the Check-In process
2. Educate donors about how their blood types can be optimized to help more patients.
3. Ensure donors have their post-donation information and check their recovery time.
4. Encourage donors to download Donor App, use RapidPass and schedule next appointments via BookNow.
5. Reach out to donors with friendly reminder calls and help reschedule appointments as needed to keep our community connected and engaged.
6. Report any issues to the collections staff and keep donors safe.
7. Sanitize and disinfect donor areas as needed

Become a Blood Drive Ambassador

REQUIREMENTS:

1. Ability to understand technology needed for position: Donor Check-in, Donor Tablet, Rapid Pass, Donor App
2. 3-6 month commitment, renewable each year
3. Volunteer must be age 13-15 with additional adult supervision* or aged 16+
4. Volunteer must be mature enough to maintain confidentiality and respond appropriately to adverse donor reactions



Become a Blood Donor Ambassador



Volunteer Opportunities

Listed below are volunteer opportunities that match your interests and availability. Click on positions that interest you to learn more and see if it is something you would like to do. If you find the opportunity is a match, scroll to the bottom and click "apply now". You will be able to select up to 3 options and rank them by preference.

If no opportunities are listed or if these do not match what you are looking for, adjust the filters to the left to find your perfect fit.

Search by Position Name

Search

[*Blood Drive Volunteer - Must live in South Orange County](#)

Location: Orange County

[*Blood Drive Volunteer - Orange County - Central](#)

Location: Orange County

[*Blood Drive Volunteer - Orange County - North](#)

Location: Orange County

[*Blood Drive Volunteer - Riverside County](#)

How to Apply:

1. Go to Volunteer Connection
2. Click on "Opportunities" in the top tab
3. Click on positions that interest you
4. Read position descriptions
5. Click "Apply Now"

Host A Blood Drive

Create impact in your community and support local hospitals with blood donations your event garners!

Host on campus at a gym or large event space, or host off campus at sites like churches or parks

Promote on social media through short form content, graphic designs



Partner with local organizations and receive sponsors to provide snacks/goodies!

Create bonds with nurses and Red Cross staff that will handle all donation procedures

Sign Up to Host a Blood Drive:



Sickle Cell Fighter

High School Scholarship Program

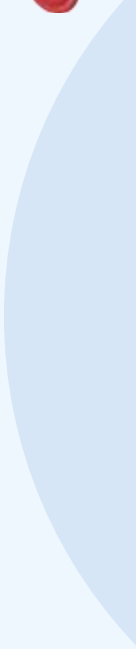
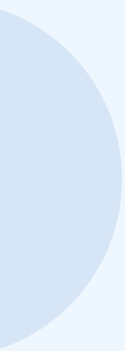
The American Red Cross Sickle Cell Fighter High School Scholarship program is a student scholarship program that will reward schools that successfully collect blood from donors who are Black, supporting the goal of helping sickle cell patients by diversifying the blood supply

Awarded to the top 10 high schools in the country that host at least one blood drive and collect the most units from donors who self-identify as African American (minimum of 50) during the school year

REWARD: \$5,000 scholarship

To utilize to continue their education at an accredited two-year, four-year, or professional trade school





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Other Red Cross Initiatives

Donating Blood

Each month there are great incentives for donors (Amazon Gift Cards, Superbowl Tickets, raffle tickets)

Whole Blood Donor Requirements:

- Donation frequency: Every 56 days, up to 6 times a year*
- You must be in good health and feeling well**
- You must be at least 16 years old in most states
- You must weigh at least 110 lbs

Power Red Donor Requirements

- Donation frequency: Every 112 days, up to 3 times/year*
- You must be in good health and feeling well**
- **Male donors**⁺ must be at least 17 years old in most states, at least 5'1" tall and weigh at least 130 lbs
- **Female donors**⁺ must be at least 19 years old, at least 5'3" tall and weigh at least 150 lbs



Be a friend. Give blood.

Come to give blood **Aug. 29–Sept. 21** for an exclusive Red Cross x PEANUTS® mystery bag with one of four special T-shirt designs, while they last. Open the bag to find out which iconic design is yours!

PEANUTS® x  American Red Cross

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Thank you!

This slideshow presentation will be emailed to all registrants following this meeting

Questions?

Contact lauren.ko@redcross.org