

# Steps to Better Kidney Health for People with Sickle Cell Disease



Accessible link: <https://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/sicklecell/betterhealthtoolkit/index.html>

People with sickle cell disease (SCD) are at greater risk than the general population for kidney complications. Below are common kidney complications and steps you can take for better kidney health.

## Albuminuria (too much protein in the urine).

People with SCD often have albuminuria, or too much protein in the urine (possibly an early sign of kidney disease). **Remind your provider to check your urine every year.** A simple urine test done every year will help your provider monitor the amount of protein in your urine. Your provider may prescribe medicines that lower the amount of protein in your urine to help protect your kidneys.

## Worsening anemia related to chronic kidney disease

Chronic kidney disease is a condition in which the ability of the kidneys to make urine properly decreases over time. In people with SCD, chronic kidney disease can cause worsening anemia, a condition in which the body does not make enough red blood cells.

**Share with your provider if you have any of the following symptoms of anemia:**

|                                                                                     |                                                          |                                                                                     |                                                               |                                                                                       |                            |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------|
|  | <b>Worsening fatigue</b><br>(feeling tired and worn out) |  | <b>Generalized weakness</b><br>(muscle movement difficulties) |  | <b>Pale skin</b>           |
|  | <b>Cold hands and feet</b>                               |  | <b>Dizziness</b>                                              |  | <b>Shortness of breath</b> |

Your provider will likely prescribe medicines to treat anemia caused by chronic kidney disease.

Learn more about the safe use of medicines here: [www.cdc.gov/SCD/medicines](http://www.cdc.gov/SCD/medicines)

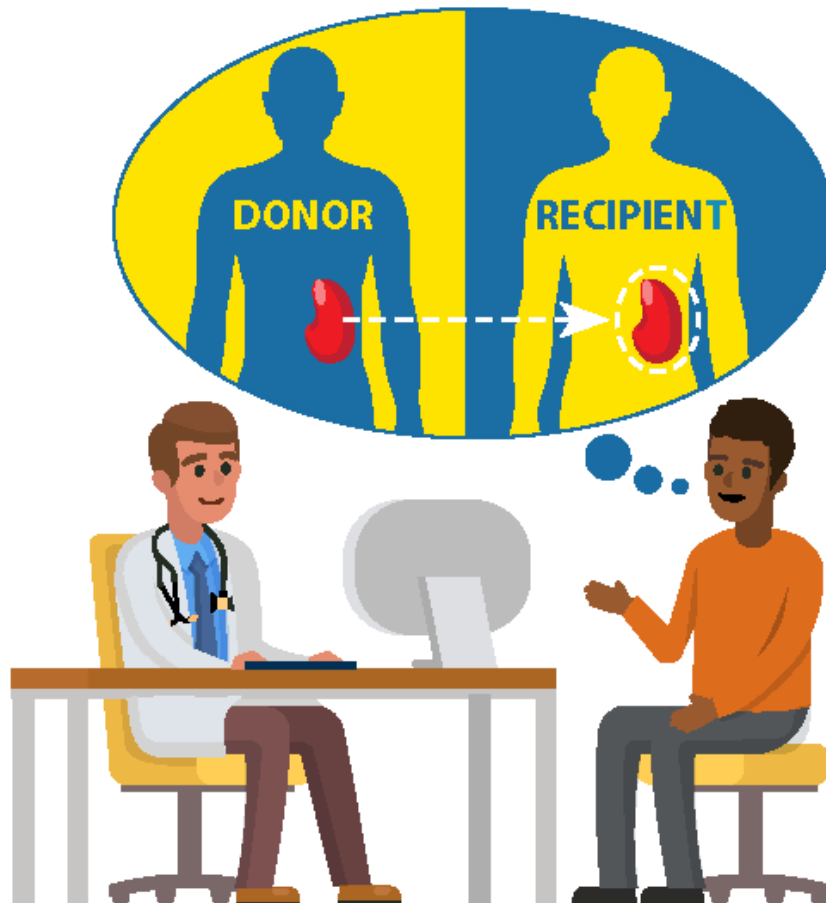


**Centers for Disease Control and Prevention**  
National Center on Birth Defects and Developmental Disabilities



## End-stage kidney disease

Chronic kidney disease can progress into end-stage kidney disease, a possibly fatal condition in which your kidneys stop working. **In later stages of kidney disease, ask your provider if a kidney transplant (a surgery in which a damaged kidney is replaced with a healthy kidney from someone else) is an option for you.**



Learn more about kidney disease here: [www.cdc.gov/kidneydisease](http://www.cdc.gov/kidneydisease)

Visit the “Sickle Cell Disease: Steps to Better Health” toolkit available here: [www.cdc.gov/SCD/betterhealth](http://www.cdc.gov/SCD/betterhealth)

Source: Liem RI, Lanzkron S, D Coates T, DeCastro L, Desai AA, Ataga KI, et. al. American Society of Hematology 2019 guidelines for sickle cell disease: cardiopulmonary and kidney disease. *Blood Adv.* 2019 Dec 10;3(23):3867-3897.