DO YOU USE THE EMERGENCY DEPARTMENT FOR CARE OF SICKLE CELL DISEASE?
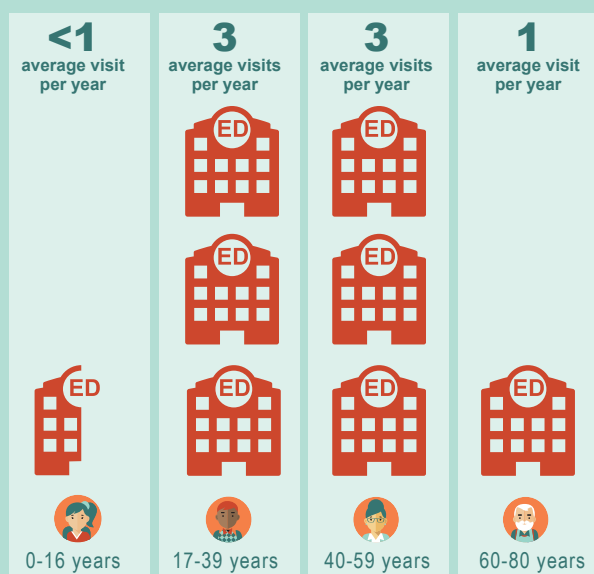
WHAT TO KNOW BEFORE YOU GO.

Children and adults with sickle cell disease (SCD) often require care in the emergency department (ED) of hospitals or clinics for health issues related to SCD. The ED may be your only option for health care when symptoms, such as pain crises, cannot be managed at home or when you do not have access to a healthcare provider who specializes in treating SCD.

The Sickle Cell Data Collection (SCDC) program found that in California, people with SCD seek care in the ED an average of three times a year from their late teens to their late 50s. *Excruciating pain, known as a sickle cell crisis, is the most common reason for these ED visits.*

Emergency Department (ED) Visits Among People with Sickle Cell in California, 2005-2014

<1 average visit per year	3 average visits per year	3 average visits per year	1 average visit per year
0-16 years	17-39 years	40-59 years	60-80 years

Tips for receiving better care in the ED

Before you get sick or have a pain crisis, work with your regular doctor to

☐ Make sure that information in your electronic medical record (EMR) is updated, including your medical history and current pain medicines.

☐ Create a pain management plan and make sure it is entered into your EMR. Keep with you a printed copy of the plan and a list of all your medicines.

When you go to the ED

☐ Tell the ED staff right away that you have SCD.

☐ Share openly with your ED nurse and doctor

   • Your medical history, including a list of your medicines.

   • Your pain management plan. Ask the ED nurse or doctor to look up your plan in your EMR or share a printed copy.

   • Your regular doctor's contact information. If the ED nurse or doctor has concerns about your pain management, ask the ED staff to call your regular doctor.