

Understanding Your Pain

Acute

- **What it feels like:** Sudden, very severe pain that comes on quickly
- **What's happening:** Your sickle cells are blocking blood flow in a new way
- **Why you come to the hospital:** This severe pain needs strong medicines and close monitoring
- **Goal:** Get the pain under control so you can go home feeling much better

Chronic

- **What it feels like:** Pain that stays with you most days
- **What's happening:** Your body has been affected by sickle cell disease over time
- **Why it's different:** This pain can be managed at home with the right plan
- **Goal:** Learn to manage this pain so you can do the things you enjoy

Changing the Treatment Plan

- As you get older with sickle cell disease, your body changes. The pain you feel now might be different from when you were younger.
- The hospital is the best place for acute pain crises, but chronic pain can be managed just as well at home. Plus, you may be more comfortable there!
- Your doctors still care about your pain. We are helping you learn to understand and manage it in a new way.

Going home doesn't mean

- Your pain isn't real
- We don't care about you
- You're not sick enough
- You did something wrong

Going home means

- You are ready to manage your pain
- You have the tools and support you need
- You're becoming more independent

Managing Chronic Pain

- Heating pads or warm baths
- Stretching or movement
- Relaxation techniques
- Spending time with family or friends
- Distraction activities you enjoy
- Take your daily medications as prescribed

You Got This!

Managing chronic pain is a skill, just like learning to ride a bike or play a video game. It takes practice, but you can do it! Having chronic pain doesn't mean you can't have a good life. Many people with sickle cell disease go to school, work, have families, and do things they love, while managing their pain at home.