

## FEVER IN CHILDREN WITH SICKLE CELL DISEASE

Historically, bacterial infections, especially pneumococcal sepsis, were the most common cause of death in children with sickle cell disease. Fever (101.0 °F) is sometimes the only sign and is always the easiest sign to recognize when a child gets this life-threatening infection. If your child has a fever of 101 or greater, it should be treated as a medical emergency and they need to be seen by a doctor who should draw blood cultures, do a chest X-ray if needed, and then give **two** doses of IV antibiotics 12-24 hours apart.

### IMPORTANT POINTS TO REMEMBER THAT COULD SAVE YOUR CHILD'S LIFE

- Keep a working thermometer in the home at all times.
- DO NOT mask a low-grade fever by giving your child medications such as Tylenol® or Motrin®. It might treat the fever but IT WILL NOT TREAT THE CAUSE OF THE FEVER. If the temp continues to go up to **101** or higher your child must be examined by a doctor.
- Always call your hematology doctors when the fever is detected. After the doctors are notified **THEN** you may give the Motrin or Tylenol to bring the fever down.
- Children under the age of 1 year and kids who look really sick have to stay in the hospital over night. All others will be seen the next day by their primary doctor, the hematologist, or in the ER to receive the second dose of antibiotics.
- **As soon as the fever is detected, they need to be evaluated. Children have been known to die in as little as 12 hours from an untreated fever.**