

## Help patients like Teresa

Teresa was born with sickle cell disease—a disorder that will last a lifetime for her. Blood transfusions help relieve pain and reduce complications associated with her sickle cell disease.

By joining our Sickle Cell Donor Program, you can help ensure that patients like Teresa have blood available when they need it the most.

Learn more about sickle cell disease and read Teresa's story at [MBC.ORG](http://MBC.ORG)



## Make a date to save a life today!

You can give the gift of life at any of our community donor centers or blood drives. Appointments can be made online at [MBC.ORG](http://MBC.ORG) or by calling 1-888-GIVE-BLD (888-448-3253).

**Check “yes”** during your health history questionnaire to enroll in the Sickle Cell Donor Program and maximize the impact of your generous donation.

### About Memorial Blood Centers

Memorial Blood Centers has been saving lives since 1948 as an independent nonprofit supplying life-saving blood to area hospitals and other partners throughout the U.S.



To learn more about individuals and communities affected by sickle cell disease and sickle cell trait, please contact the Sickle Cell Foundation of Minnesota at [info@sicklecellmn.org](mailto:info@sicklecellmn.org).



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[MBC.ORG](http://MBC.ORG) • 1-888-GIVE-BLD

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## SICKLE CELL DONOR PROGRAM

Tackling sickle cell disease in our community



## What is sickle cell disease?

Sickle cell disease is a life-long blood disorder in which red blood cells are crescent-shaped, similar to a sickle used to cut grass or wheat.



Normal red blood cells are round and live for about 120 days. They can move freely and squeeze through small blood vessels to deliver oxygen.



Sickle cells can become hard and sticky and clump together. They can easily form clumps that block the flow of blood and oxygen.

When blood flow is blocked, extreme pain, strokes, and organ damage can occur. In many cases, blood transfusions may be an essential part of treatment for patients with sickle cell disease.

Sickle cell disease is caused by inheriting two abnormal hemoglobin genes, one from each parent. People who inherit just one abnormal gene carry the sickle cell trait but do not have symptoms.

## Finding a match for sickle cell fighters

Sickle cell disease is the most common hereditary disease in the U.S., affecting approximately 100,000 Americans. Among African-Americans, 1 in 365 newborns have sickle cell disease, and 1 in 13 have sickle cell trait. Sickle cell disease also affects people of Mediterranean, Middle Eastern, Latin American, and Indian descent.

### Why are African-American donors needed for sickle cell patients?

Since sickle cell disease is hereditary, donors of the same ethnic backgrounds are more likely to have similar blood characteristics. For this reason, African-Americans are more likely to provide the best unique match for people with sickle cell disease. This helps eliminate complications that are more likely to occur when sickle cell patients require frequent transfusions. Memorial Blood Centers conducts extended testing on blood donated by people who are in the Sickle Cell Donor Program to help meet this need.

### What is the Sickle Cell Donor Program?

Memorial Blood Centers' Sickle Cell Donor Program matches patients who have sickle cell disease with donors whose blood has been tested for a precise match. Having specially matched blood available for a sickle cell patient helps prevent complications that can result from the need for frequent blood transfusions.

The change is dramatic and immediate. Precisely matched blood brings people like Trey and many others out of sickle cell pain. Read Trey's full story at [MBC.ORG](http://MBC.ORG).



**12 in 13 African-Americans are born without the sickle cell trait and might be the perfect match to donate blood for a child battling this painful disease.**

### How do I enroll?

Next time you donate, respond "yes" to the Sickle Cell Donor Program question in your health history questionnaire.

Being part of the Sickle Cell Donor Program requires only your willingness to donate blood regularly, or when there is a need for a specific match to help a patient with sickle cell disease.

