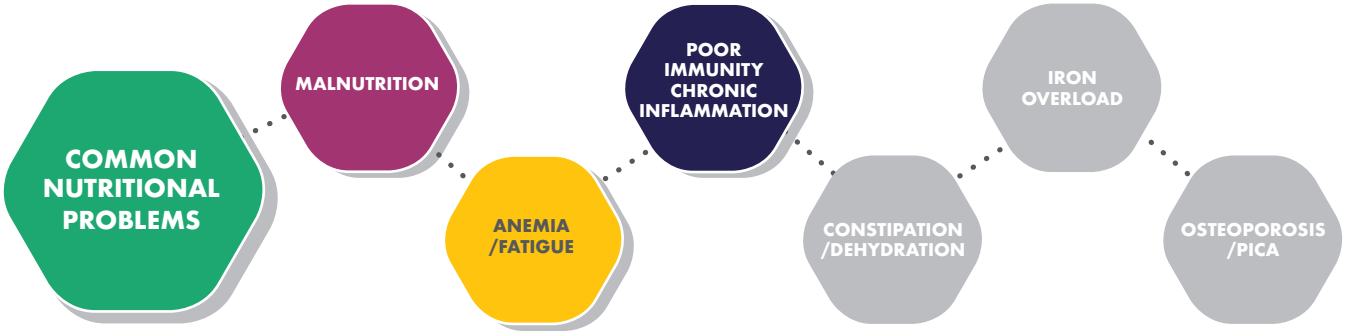
SICKLE CELL NUTRITION

Nutritional strategies for common nutritional problems in Sickle Cell Disease

6

Considering nutrition as a management option in Sickle Cell Disease (SCD) plays an important role in enabling people affected by sickle cell to Eat Well and Live Well, therefore diet and nutrition knowledge needs to be tailored to SCD. This leaflet aims to provide nutritional strategies to manage the common nutritional problems specific to the needs of sickle cell patients to improve their health and wellbeing outcomes.

NUTRITIONAL STRATEGIES FOR COMMON NUTRITIONAL PROBLEMS IN SICKLE CELL DISEASE:



MALNUTRITION

Reduced intake of:
- Protein
- Energy
- Micronutrients
- Reduced appetite
- Reduced food intake
- Weight loss

Food first advice
- Fortify food and drinks
- Fortify to increase protein and energy
- Choose Energy dense foods
- Eat little and often

Oral nutritional supplements
- Prescribed (requires a nutritional assessment)
- Over the counter Supplement sachets –made up with milk
- Ready made supplements
- Variety

CHRONIC ANAEMIA AND FATIGUE

Chronic Anaemia (low energy and tiredness)
- Eating little and often
- Increase intake of energy dense foods
- Food fortification
- Good sources of iron rich foods (if not iron overloaded)
- Folic acid (green leafy veg, broccoli, avocado, citrus fruits, whole wheat)
- Regular gentle activity/exercise

Fatigue

Factors affecting fatigue
- Physical
- Emotional
- Mental
- Environmental
- Socio-economical

POOR IMMUNITY/ CHRONIC INFLAMMATION

Poor Immunity
- Increased risk of infection
- Increased risk of malnutrition
- Increase need for Protein and energy foods
- Food hygiene – wash foods, check expiry dates
- Vitamin D (sunshine, fatty fish, eggs, butter, supplements)
- Selenium – (brazil nuts, fatty fish)
- Zinc – (pecan nuts, eggs, fish, poultry, beans)

Chronic Inflammation
- Oxidative stress
- Tissue and cell damage

Anti-oxidant foods:
- Vitamin A, C, E – 5 a Day

Anti-inflammatory foods:
- Omega 3 – (salmon, mackerel, sardines, tuna, walnuts, walnut oil, flaxseeds/oil, chia seeds, canola oil)
- Supplements – check with your HCP

SUMMARY:
Managing the nutritional needs of people affected by SCD, tailored to their unique nutritional needs, risks and challenges is fundamental to promoting their wellbeing and health outcomes, thereby enabling them to Live well with Sickle Cell.

For more related resources – www.sicklecellnutritionacademy.com

Reference:
Matthews C. Co-developing a health literacy framework to integrate nutrition into standard care in SCD, Doctoral thesis, 2023. Hyacinth, H.I., Gee, B.E. and Hibbert, J.M., 2010. The role of Nutrition in Sickle Cell Disease. Nutrition Metabolic Insights, [pdf] 3, pp. 57-67