

Sickle Cell Trait Education and Testing Options

Sickle Cell Education for the Student-Athlete

- Sickle cell trait is not a disease; it is the inheritance of one gene for the sickle hemoglobin and one gene for the normal hemoglobin. Sickle cell trait will not turn into the disease. Sickle cell trait is a life-long condition that will not change over time. People at high risk for having sickle cell trait are those whose ancestors come from Africa, South or Central America, India, Saudi Arabia and Caribbean and Mediterranean countries. However, persons of all races and ethnicities may test positive for the sickle cell trait.
- During intense exercise by individuals with sickle cell trait, the red blood cells containing the sickle hemoglobin can change shape from round to quarter-moon, or “sickle”. Sickled red cells may accumulate in the blood during intense exercise, blocking normal blood flow to the tissues and muscles. During intense exercise, athletes with sickle cell trait have experienced physical distress, have collapsed and have even died. Heat, dehydration, altitude and asthma can increase the risk for and worsen complications associated with sickle cell trait, even when exercise is not intense.
- Athletes with sickle cell trait should not be excluded from participation, but extra precaution can be taken. The NCAA recommends that athletic departments confirm the sickle cell trait status in all student-athletes. Knowledge of the sickle cell trait status can be a gateway to education and simple precautions that may prevent collapse among athletes with sickle cell trait, allowing you to thrive in your sport.
- For more information and resources, visit: www.NCAA.org/health-safety.
This form has been adapted from: NCAA: A Fact Sheet for Student-Athletes.

Sickle Cell Testing Options

- The University of Notre Dame (“University”) offers testing for the sickle cell trait using a hemoglobin electrophoresis test (“Test”) at no cost to the student. While the University encourages student-athletes to be tested for the sickle cell trait, participation is strictly voluntary.

Please initial next to the option that you are choosing and sign and date below where indicated.

____ I would like to be tested for sickle cell trait.

____ I certify that I have already been tested for sickle cell trait and have provided this documentation to my athletic trainer.

____ I do not wish to be tested for sickle cell trait. By refusing the Test, I certify that I have read and understand the information contained herein and the risks involved with refusing this Test. I acknowledge that I had the opportunity to ask questions of the University staff with knowledge of sickle cell testing regarding my decision. I fully understand the consequences of this decision and have voluntarily decided to decline the Test.

Student-Athlete Name (Print)

Date

Student-Athlete Signature

NDID

Sport

If student-athlete is under the age of 18:

Signature of Parent or Legal Guardian

Date