



MEDICAL AND RESEARCH ADVISORY COMMITTEE (MARAC)

SCDAA's MARAC Encourages Individuals with Sickle Cell Disease to Speak with Their Health Care Providers About Vaccinations

Jan. 16, 2026 - Recent news and discussion about vaccinations can be confusing to the sickle cell community. SCDAA's Medical and Research Advisory Committee (MARAC) strongly encourages those living with sickle cell disease to discuss vaccinations with their providers and to keep their vaccinations updated.

Individuals with sickle cell disease (SCD) are at an increased risk of severe infections due to decreased function of the spleen. Functional asplenia, the absence of splenic function without having the spleen removed by surgery, happens in people with sickle cell disease and can make sickle cell warriors much more vulnerable to infection than the general population. Without preventive care, including vaccination and penicillin prophylaxis, many children with sickle cell disease could experience severe infections.

Although treatments for sickle cell disease have improved significantly since the 1990s, individuals with SCD can still be harmed by infections. Studies show that vaccines are powerful shields against serious bacterial and viral infections in sickle cell warriors. Even more than the general public, it is important that individuals with sickle cell disease protect themselves from infections through maintaining vaccinations.

The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) has provided guidance on the administration of vaccines for the general public, and MARAC endorses these tools in helping communities understand and stay informed about the importance of vaccinations:

- AAP's newly updated [vaccine confidence toolkit](#)
- AAP's [messaging tools](#) (collaboration with the FrameWorks Institute)
- AAP's [fact-checked series](#)

We encourage all patients/caregivers to discuss vaccinations with their physician.