# Mayo Clinic Minute: Sickle cell disease explained

| Video | Audio |
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| **Asmaa Ferdjallah, M.D.**<br>**Pediatric Hematology/Oncology**<br>**Mayo Clinic** | "Sickle cell disease is a genetic, it's an inherited disorder. It's caused by a mutation in the gene that encodes our hemoglobin." |
| | Mayo Clinic's Dr. Asmaa Ferdjallah (esmah fer-jallah) says the normally flexible red blood cells turn into rigid crescent shapes — sickle cells— that get stuck in blood vessels. And that can cause problems down the line. |
| | "Fortunately, in the United States, every baby, as part of their newborn screen, is actually screened for sickle cell disease." |
| | Babies may not show symptoms until 5 or 6 months, with pain or swelling in the fingertips. And then, later in life, … |
| | "So it's pain in the extremities, in the back. It's all caused from those sickle cells being stuck in the blood vessels." |
| | Along with pain, the risks for heart and kidney damage and stroke are increased. |
| | "Some of our patients actually experienced stroke, or what we call silent strokes, from the sickle cells actually getting stuck and creating a blockage in the cerebral vessels." |
| | She says that's why it's important to work with patients early on and regularly. |
| | "The earlier you go to curative therapy, the better." |
| | For the Mayo Clinic News Network, I'm Jason Howland. |