Baby It’s Cold Outside

January 15, 2015 By Cyntra Scott

The fall and winter seasons often wreak havoc on those of us living with sickle cell disease (SCD).ÃÂ,Ã,Â The number of hospital admissions and clinic visits rise as the temperature gets colder and winter brings precipitation in the form of ice, rain and snow. These conditions increase the frequency and intensity of pain each day and triggers pain crises.

One reason for this suffering is that cold temperatures cause the veins to constrict.ÃÂ,Ã,Â When your veins constrict and you have SCD, this causes the already difficult flow of sickled cells through the veins to become even more difficult.ÃÂ,Ã,Â In response, sickle cells do what they do best; they clump together, get stuck, clog the vein, and cause severe pain.

During the cold weather, I experience severe reduction of blood circulation in my hands and feet.ÃÂ,Ã,Â My limbs lose their color and become numb.ÃÂ,Ã,Â This can last between 30 minutes and one hour.

The condition I just described is called Raynaud’s (RAY-NOIDS) disease. Raynaud’s disease causes a sudden decrease of blood circulation in the fingers and toes.ÃÂ,Ã,Â Raynaud’s also causes the blood vessels to constrict.ÃÂ,Ã,Â The combination of SCD and Raynaud’s can be painful and frustrating.

This is why I try to take extra precautions during cold weather. Here are a few ways I’ve found to beat the SCD cold weather trigger:ÃÂ¢Ã¢Â,Â¬Ã,Â¨

Carry gloves. Always have a pair of these hand warmers in your possession, and keep an extra spare pair handy.ÃÂ,Ã,Â Slip gloves into your pocketbook, coat pocket, book bag, or backpack.ÃÂ,Ã,Â If you drive, keep a pair of gloves and other crisis prevention emergency items, such as medication, and telephone numbers, in your car.

Dress in layers. Stay warm and keep a sweater handy.

Use lotion. Slathering on this moisturizer after your shower help your skin to retain body heat.

Buy heating pads. These limb warmers come in all shapes and sizes. Find the ones that best suit you. Heating pads come in hand-sized, beanbag-shaped versions. They’re usually made for one-time use and can keep you warm for 6 to 10 hours. Put one in your gloves, socks, or boots.ÃÂ,Ã,Â They cost about $1 for two in a pack.ÃÂ,Ã,Â Buy them at stores such as CVS,

Walgreens, Home Depot and Target.ÃÂ,Ã,Â Take it from me, these little, easy-to-activate pads work wonders.

Warm up your car before getting in. If you have the luxury of an automatic car starter that will warm up your car before you jump in, that can be a great help.ÃÂ,Ã,Â If not, turn on your car and blast the heat while you stay toasty inside.ÃÂ,Ã,Â No automatically-heated car seats? Buy a heated car seat cover.

Wear socks. We lose the most body heat from our heads and feet.ÃÂ,Ã,Â A pair of thick socks can help to retain that precious warmth.

Stay hydrated. We tend to drink less when it isn't hot outside.ÃÂ,Ã,Â Be sure to drink water throughout the day to keep your body's tissues hydrated.ÃÂ,Ã,Â ÃÂ,Ã,Â ÃÂ,Ã,Â ÃÂ,Ã,Â ÃÂ,Ã,Â ÃÂ,Ã,Â ÃÂ,Ã,Â ÃÂ,Ã,Â ÃÂ,Ã,Â ÃÂ,Ã,Â

Sip hot tea. A cup of this body-warming brew can help heat you up from the inside.

Stay Warm.ÃÂ,Ã,Â Be Well. Be Wonderful.

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