



Lupus Fact Sheet

- Lupus is a chronic, autoimmune disease that causes inflammation of various part of the body, especially the skin, joints, blood and kidneys. The immune system normally protects the body against viruses, bacteria and other foreign materials. In an autoimmune disease like lupus, the immune system loses its ability to tell the difference between foreign substances and its own cells and tissue. The immune system then makes antibodies directed against self.
- Lupus is NOT infectious, rare or cancerous.
- Research data shows that between 1,400,000 and 2,000,000 people have been diagnosed with lupus. (1994 data)
- Although the cause of lupus is unknown, scientists suspect that individuals are genetically predisposed to lupus, and know that environmental factors such as infections, antibiotics, ultraviolet light, extreme stress and certain drugs play a critical role in triggering lupus.
- Lupus affects 1 out of every 185 Americans and strikes adult women 10-15 times more frequently than adult men. Lupus is more prevalent in African Americans, Hispanics, Native Americans and Asians.
- Only 10% of people with lupus will have a close relative (parent or sibling) who already has or may develop lupus. Only about 5% of the children born to individuals with lupus will develop the illness.
- Lupus can be difficult to diagnose as the symptoms come and go and mimic many other illnesses. Some symptoms of lupus can be transient joint and muscle pain, fatigue, a rash caused by or made worse by sunlight, low grade fevers, hair loss, pleurisy, appetite loss, sores in the nose or mouth, or painful sensitivity of the fingers to the cold.
- Although lupus ranges from mild to life-threatening and thousands of Americans die with lupus each year, the majority of cases can be controlled with proper treatment.
- While there is currently no cure for lupus, new research brings unexpected findings and increased hope each year.



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Test Yourself for Lupus

1. Have you ever had achy, painful and/or swollen joints for more than three months?
2. Have you ever had an unexplained fever of over 100 degrees for more than a few days?
3. Have you ever experienced persistent, extreme fatigue/exhaustion and weakness for days or even weeks at a time, even after 6-8 hours of restful nighttime sleep?
4. Have you ever had a sensitivity to the sun where your skin "breaks out" after being in the sun (not a sunburn)?
5. Have you ever been told that you have a low blood count(s) - anemia, low white cell count or a low platelet count?
6. Have you ever been told you have protein in your urine?
7. Have you ever had chest pain with breathing for more than a few days (pleurisy)?
8. Do your fingers and/or toes become pale, numb or uncomfortable in the cold?
9. Have you ever had a prominent redness or color change on your face in the shape of a butterfly across the bridge of your nose and cheeks?
10. Have you ever had a seizure or convulsion?
11. Have you had any sores in your mouth that lasted for more than two weeks?

If you answer "yes" to at least three of these questions, you should consult with your doctor and discuss any questions you may have about lupus.

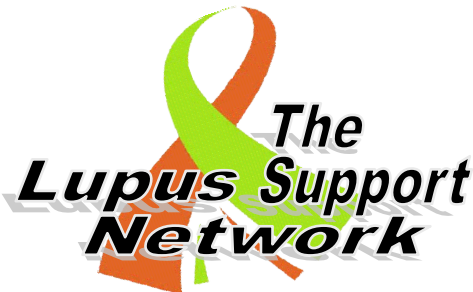


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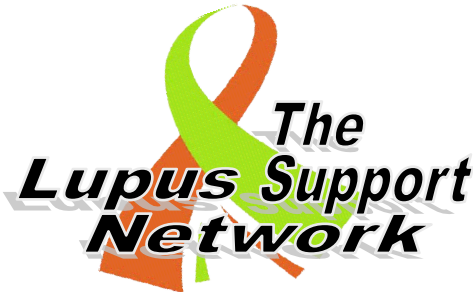


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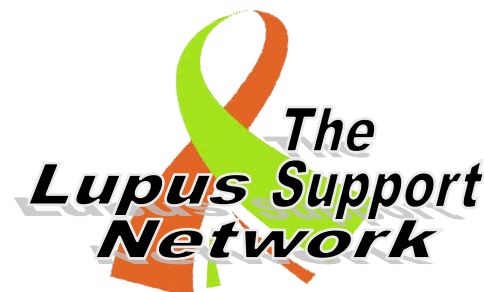


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