



October is lupus awareness month 2008

What is Lupus? *

Systemic Lupus Erythematosus is a chronic autoimmune disease, which causes inflammation of various parts of the body. The inflammation is caused when the immune system, instead of serving its normal protective function, forms antibodies that attack healthy tissues and organs. Lupus can affect the skin, joints, kidneys, lungs, heart, nervous system, blood and/or other body organs or systems. Lupus is not infectious, rare or cancerous.

Facts About Lupus *

- Lupus affects 1 out of every 185 Americans.
- Lupus also affects men and the elderly.
- Each year, thousands of Americans die from lupus.
- Lupus affects adult women 10 to 15 times more frequently than men.
- Approximately 5% of children born to individuals with lupus will develop the disease.
- Approximately 10% of lupus patients have a parent or sibling who has been, or may be, diagnosed with lupus.
- Approximately 1 out of every 102 women have lupus; 1 out of 123 white women, and 1 out of 62 African-American and Hispanic women.
- Nearly two million Americans are reported to have been diagnosed with lupus.

What Are The Symptoms? *

- Transient joint and muscle pain
- Low grade fevers
- Difficulty taking a deep breath
- A rash caused by sunlight
- Appetite loss
- Painful sensitivity of the fingers to the cold
- Hair loss
- Fatigue

What Course Does it Take? *

- 80-90% of people with lupus can look forward to a normal life span if they follow the instructions of their physician.
- With proper treatment of symptoms, the majority of cases of lupus can be controlled.
- Early diagnosis, proper treatment, and patient and family education are vital to a good prognosis.
- Sunlight, infection, injury, surgery, stress or exhaustion can trigger "flare-ups" of lupus a more active state of the disease.
- The impact of lupus ranges from mild to life-threatening.

What Type Of Physician Treats Lupus? *

- Treatment for many lupus patients is provided by rheumatologists who specialize in inflammatory diseases.
- All questions about a possible diagnosis or treatment options for lupus should be directed to a physician.
- Depending on an individual's symptoms, other medical specialists may also be involved in treatment.

* Information provided by the Lupus Foundation of America

For more information on Lupus, contact the projects currently funded by the Ohio Commission on Minority Health

Elyria Club of Negro Business & Professional Women
Lupus Foundation of America, Inc. Greater Cleveland Chapter
Lupus Foundation of America, Marcy Zitron Chapter
Lupus Foundation of America, Northwest Ohio Chapter
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Urban Mission/Neighborhood Community Development Center
YWCA of Youngstown

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