

***Lupus Awareness Month is observed during May to increase public understanding of this cruel and mysterious disease that ravages different part of the body. Spread the word and share these facts.***

**May1.** Lupus is an unpredictable, chronic autoimmune disease that ravages different parts of the body.

**May 2.** In lupus, something goes wrong with the immune system, the part of the body that fights off viruses, bacteria, and germs. The result is the production of autoantibodies that cause inflammation.

**May 3.** Ninety percent of the people who develop lupus are women, though men can also develop lupus and their disease can affect some organs more severely.

**May 4.** Most often, lupus develops between ages 15 and 44.  However, between 10 and 20 percent of cases develop during childhood and these cases can evolve into serious health complications more rapidly.

**May 5.** African Americans, Hispanics/Latinos, Asians and Pacific Islanders, and Native Americans are diagnosed with lupus two or three times more frequently than Caucasians; however, lupus affects people of all races and ethnicities.

**May 6.** Lupus is not contagious and cannot be “given” to another person.

**May 7.** To make a lupus diagnosis, doctors evaluate a patient’s current symptoms, lab test results, personal medical history and family medical history.

**May 8.** Lupus can affect any organ system of the body, including the heart, kidneys, lungs, blood, joints and skin.

**May 9.** The malar, or “butterfly” rash on the face is present in an estimated one-third of people with lupus. This flat, reddish rash across the bridge of the nose and cheeks often is the only outward symptom of lupus (though other signs and symptoms might be present).

**May 10.** Though all pregnancies of women with lupus are considered “high risk”, advancing technology and a better understanding of the disease have improved pregnancy outcomes. Today, 80 percent of women with lupus symptoms that are not active can have successful pregnancies.

**May 11.** Lupus is not a form of arthritis, but many people with lupus do suffer from joint and/or muscle pain

**May 12**. Among people with lupus that affects the skin, poor mental health is common and has been found to be similar or worse than mental health among those with type 2 diabetes, recent heart attack, heart failure and high blood pressure.

**May 13.** People with lupus have two times the risk of developing cardiovascular disease than do people without lupus.

**May 14.** Nearly 3 in 4 people with lupus surveyed (76 percent) said fatigue limits their ability to participate in social activities.

**May 15.** An estimated 1.5 million Americans and 5 million people worldwide are living with lupus.

**May 16.** Factors that may trigger a lupus flare include infections, ultraviolet light, stress, some medications, environment with some still unknown.

**May 17.** Many symptoms of lupus imitate those of other illnesses, and can come and go over time, making diagnosis difficult.
Week 4

**May 18**. Based on a recent study, it takes an average of six years for people with lupus to be diagnosed from the time they first notice their lupus symptoms.

**May 19.** A majority of people with lupus surveyed (63 percent) report being incorrectly diagnosed. Of those reporting an incorrect diagnosis, more than half of them (55 percent) report seeing four or more different health care providers for their lupus symptoms before being accurately diagnosed.

**May 20.** First degree relatives of people with lupus (parent, sibling or child) have six times the risk of developing the disease.

**May 21.** Sensitivity to ultraviolet light (present in both sunlight and artificial light) affects as many as two thirds of individuals with lupus, and may cause fever, debilitating fatigue, joint pain, rashes and other symptoms.

**May 22.** Of the 23 percent of people with lupus who experience severe lupus flares, all or most of the time over the last three months, 40 percent were admitted to the hospital at least once during the past 12 months, with an average stay of 10.5 days.

**May 23.** 40 percent of adults with lupus and as many as 66% of all children with lupus will develop kidney complications.

**May 24.** Almost three-quarters (74 percent) of caregivers report that caring for someone with lupus has an impact on their work productivity.

**May 25.** More than half (55 percent) of people with lupus surveyed whose work is affected are working part-time, intermittently or are unemployed because of lupus.

**May 26.** People with lupus usually are encouraged to engage in appropriate daily exercise to maintain muscle and bone strength, but they also need to balance exercise with rest.

**May 27.** On average, the annual cost of lupus, including expenses related to treatment and loss of productivity, exceed $20,000, and can increase to $63,000 if the kidneys are involved.

**May 28.** People with lupus take on average nearly eight prescription medications to manage all of their medical conditions including lupus.

**May 29.**  About half of all people with lupus will experience a serious infection during the course of their disease.

**May 30.** As many as 60 percent of people with lupus will experience some type of memory problem, such as recalling names, dates and appointments or balancing a checkbook.

**May 31.** With current methods of therapy, 80 to 90 percent of people with non-organ threatening lupus can look forward to having the same lifespan as people without lupus.

