

# Health Information

Everyone knows the month of October is Breast Cancer Awareness Month. There's no doubting it, with all the pink ribbons, *Race for the Cure*, media reminders and a host of other great functions. The effort that has gone in to making October Breast Cancer Awareness Month is commendable. The results are amazing. But did you know there is another serious health issue which has October as it's awareness month? Probably not. Most people are as unaware of Lupus, as they are of October being Lupus Awareness Month. Our mission is familiarize you with the facts on Lupus. So next October, perhaps you'll think of both of these serious illnesses. The following information is provided by The Lupus Foundation of the Triad.

Lupus Erythematosus is a chronic inflammatory and sometimes disabling disease, which causes the body to fight against itself. There are three types of Lupus: Discoid (DLE), primary skin involvement; Systemic (SLE), the more serious form, which can affect the heart, blood vessels, lungs, kidneys, nervous system, blood, skin, joints, brain, muscles, tendons, membranes, or any combination of these; and Drug Induced Lupus (DILE), which usually disappears when certain prescription drugs are discontinued. Lupus is NOT a contagious or malignant disease.

Lupus may produce one or any combination of the following symptoms: excessive fatigue and weakness, low-grade fever, chills, muscle aches, blood cell changes, kidney problems, joint pain, and/or swelling, skin rashes, chest pain, weight loss, shortness of breath, adverse reaction to the sun and other damaging lights, mouth and nasal ulcers, mental changes, or paralysis. Lupus can be fatal with severe blood cell changes, kidney problems, heart problems and/or lung problems. Symptoms may come and go rapidly and seem unbelievable to others. Most lupus patients look well when symptoms are not present. They may sometimes feel it's all in his or her mind.

**“LUPUS IS MORE PREVALENT THAN MULTIPLE SCLEROSIS, CYSTIC FIBROSIS, SICKLE CELL ANEMIA AND CEREBRAL PALSY COMBINED AND CAN BE JUST AS SERIOUS.”**

Lupus affects men, women, and children of all ages and races, with about 90% being women in the childbearing years. Approximately 35,000 North Carolinians are diagnosed with Lupus. Folks may have the disease and not be aware of it due to the difficulty of diagnosis. Lupus can mime almost any other disease; there are blood tests that can be run to help your doctor in diagnosis. With early, accurate diagnosis and proper treatment, the Lupus patient today has a better chance for a long life than was true 10 to 20 years ago.

The cause of Lupus is unknown. Research has shown that symptoms of Lupus may show an increase during times of emotional and physical stress, excessive sun, florescent and other UV lights, heat or other environmental exposures, infections, fatigue, following pregnancy, and certain medications in some persons. Lupus research is being done at many medical centers across the country

## LUPUS PATIENT GUIDELINES

- \* Get enough rest and eat well balanced meals. Proper nutrition is essential
  - \* Avoid emotional and physical stress and fatigue
  - \* Avoid exposure to direct sunlight and florescent lights
  - \* Avoid exposure to infectious and contagious diseases
  - \* Follow your doctor suggestions.
  - \* Take your medication as directed.
  - \* Keep a record of all your medications
  - \* Learn all you can about Lupus and develop a positive attitude about having this chronic disease. A good way to do this is by joining and supporting your local Lupus chapter
- Protective florescent light filter shields, which black out the damaging UV rays, area available from the LFA, Winston Triad Chapter. call 336-768-1493

*For literature or  
information, write or call  
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