

Sickle Cell Awareness Month

April 2017



Overview of Sickle Cell

Our blood has red blood cells that are round, flexible and able to move throughout the blood without difficulty. The red blood cell job is to carry oxygen all over the human body. Anemia is a result of not enough red blood cells to carry oxygen to all part of the human body.

Sickle cell is a lifelong type of anemia that passed from generation to generation by the mother or father with the sickle cell gene. In sickle cell, some of the red blood cells are not round. The red blood cells of sickle cell are long, stiff, stick to one another, preventing the red blood cell to carry oxygen throughout the human body.

Who are at Risk for Sickle Cell Anemia?

A child is born with sickle cell as a result of having a parent with the sickle cell gene. This child will either have a sickle cell trait or sickle cell disease. A child born with sickle cell trait means that this child does not have the sickle cell disease or symptoms but have the gene that can be pass to their children. A child born with sickle cell disease is a child born by bother parent with the sickle cell gene.

How to Prevent Sickle Cell Anemia

Sickle cell anemia is a blood disorder that is not preventable when a child has one or both parent with the sickle cell gene.

Sign and Symptoms of Sickle Cell Anemia

- Pain that last for hours to days
- Swelling of hands and feets
- Joint pain
- Skin and white part of eye is yellow
- Anemia

How to Prevent Sickle Cell Symptoms

- Eating Healthy
- Take Folic Acid every day
- Drink plenty water
- Stay away from the heat air

Reference

<http://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/sickle-cell-anemia/diagnosis-treatment/diagnosis/dxc-20303501>



What is lupus?

Lupus is a chronic, autoimmune disease that can damage any part of the body (skin, joints, and/or organs inside the body). Chronic means that the signs and symptoms tend to last longer than six weeks and often for many years.

In lupus, something goes wrong with your immune system, which is the part of the body that fights off viruses, bacteria, and germs ("foreign invaders," like the flu). Normally our immune system produces proteins called antibodies that protect the body from these invaders. Autoimmune means your immune system cannot tell the difference between these foreign invaders and your body's healthy tissues ("auto" means "self") and creates autoantibodies that attack and destroy healthy tissue. These autoantibodies cause inflammation, pain, and damage in various parts of the body.

Lupus is also a disease of flares (the symptoms worsen and you feel ill) and remissions (the symptoms improve and you feel better).

These are some additional facts about lupus that you should know:

- Lupus is not contagious. You cannot "catch" lupus from someone or "give" lupus to someone.
- Lupus is not like or related to cancer. Cancer is a condition of malignant, abnormal tissues that grow rapidly and spread into surrounding tissues. Lupus is an autoimmune disease, as described above. However, some treatments for lupus may include immunosuppressant drugs that are also used in chemotherapy.
- Lupus is not like or related to HIV (Human Immune Deficiency Virus) or AIDS (Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome).
- Lupus can range from mild to life-threatening and should always be treated by a doctor. With good medical care, most people with lupus can lead a full life.
- Our research estimates that at least 1.5 million Americans have lupus. The actual number may be higher; however, there have been no large-scale studies to show the actual number of people in the U.S. living with lupus.
- More than 16,000 new cases of lupus are reported annually across the country.
- It is believed that 5 million people throughout the world have a form of lupus.

- Lupus strikes mostly women of childbearing age (15-44). However, men, children, and teenagers develop lupus, too. Most people with lupus develop the disease between the ages of 15-44.
- Women of color are two to three times more likely to develop lupus than Caucasians.
- People of all races and ethnic groups can develop lupus.

Common symptoms of lupus

Because lupus can affect so many different organs, a wide range of symptoms can occur. These symptoms may come and go, and different symptoms may appear at different times during the course of the disease.

The most common symptoms of lupus, which are the same for females and males, are:

- Extreme fatigue (tiredness)
- Headaches
- Painful or swollen joints
- Fever
- Anemia (low numbers of red blood cells or hemoglobin, or low total blood volume)
- Swelling (edema) in feet, legs, hands, and/or around eyes
- Pain in chest on deep breathing (pleurisy)
- Butterfly-shaped rash across cheeks and nose
- Sun- or light-sensitivity (photosensitivity)
- Hair loss
- Abnormal blood clotting
- Fingers turning white and/or blue when cold (Raynaud's phenomenon)
- Mouth or nose ulcers

Many of these symptoms occur in other illnesses. In fact, lupus is sometimes called "the great imitator" because its symptoms are often like the symptoms of rheumatoid arthritis, blood disorders, fibromyalgia, diabetes, thyroid problems, Lyme disease, and a number of heart, lung, muscle, and bone diseases.

You play an important role in helping your doctor manage your disease. Listen to your body, ask questions and stay involved.

Treating Lupus

Lupus symptoms vary from one person to another. In many cases, the best treatment approach is with a health care team that will tailor treatment to your specific condition.

Today, physicians treat lupus using a wide variety of medicines, ranging in strength from mild to extremely strong. Prescribed medications will usually change during a person's lifetime with lupus. However, it can take months—sometimes years—before your health care team finds just the right combination of medicines to keep your lupus symptoms under control.

There are many categories of drugs physicians use to treat lupus. However, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration or "FDA" has approved only a few specifically for lupus, which include:

- Corticosteroids, including prednisone, prednisolone, methylprednisolone, and hydrocortisone
- Antimalarials, such as hydroxychloroquine (Plaquenil®) and chloroquine
- The monoclonal antibody belimumab (Benlysta®)
- Acthar (repository corticotropin injection), which contains a naturally occurring hormone called ACTH (adrenocorticotropic hormone)
- Aspirin

A rheumatologist, a doctor who specializes in diseases of the joints and muscles, generally treats people with lupus. If lupus has caused damage to a particular organ, other specialists will be consulted. For instance, a dermatologist for cutaneous lupus (skin disease), a cardiologist for heart disease, a nephrologist for kidney disease, a neurologist for brain and nervous system disease, or a gastroenterologist for gastrointestinal tract disease. A woman with lupus who is considering a pregnancy needs an obstetrician who specializes in high-risk pregnancies.

Once you have been diagnosed with lupus, your doctor will develop a treatment plan based on your age, symptoms, general health, and lifestyle. The goals of any treatment plan are to:

- Reduce inflammation caused by lupus
- Suppress your overactive immune system
- Prevent flares, and treat them when they occur
- Control symptoms like joint pain and fatigue
- Minimize damage to organs

People with lupus often require other drugs to treat conditions commonly seen with the disease. Examples include:

- Diuretics for fluid retention
- Antihypertensive drugs for high blood pressure
- Anticonvulsants for seizure disorders
- Antibiotics for infections
- Bone-strengthening drugs for osteoporosis

For more information on Lupus go to <https://www.lupus.org>