

What is Lupus?

- Lupus is a chronic autoimmune disease in which a person's immune system mistakenly attacks healthy tissue, cells and organs.
- Symptoms are unpredictable and can range from extreme fatigue, skin rashes, severe joint inflammation and muscle pain to organ failure and even death.
- The exact cause of lupus is unknown; however, research suggests it is caused by a combination of genetic and environmental factors (e.g., infection, sunlight, stress) that trigger the disease in susceptible individuals.

Who is most often affected?

Women

- Of the estimated 16,000 Americans who develop lupus each year, about 90 percent are women in their child bearing years between the ages of 15 and 45.
- Women who have lupus and become pregnant are more likely to develop preeclampsia, a serious condition that causes high blood pressure and problems with the kidneys and other organs.
- Women who have lupus are at greater risk of developing other diseases; osteoporosis, type 2 diabetes and are 50 times more likely of having a heart attack than women of a similar age.

African Americans

- African American women are three times more likely to get lupus than Caucasian women.
- Studies have shown that African Americans develop lupus earlier in life and have more symptoms. Most prevalently seizures, strokes and kidney disease.
- African-Americans are more likely to suffer premature death from lupus.

Latinos

- Latinos tend to have the most aggressive disease activity; prone to develop heart disease, kidney damage and die earlier in life from complications of lupus.
- Most Latinos that suffer from lupus develop it at a younger age and when diagnosed are already dealing with ancillary health issues as a result of the disease.
- Due to language barriers it is difficult to spread the message of what the warning signs of lupus are within Latino communities.

More information about the Lupus Research Alliance and lupus can be found by visiting www.lupusresearch.org.

Breaking through.