



Lupus is a serious public health issue with widespread consequences to individuals, families and communities nationwide.

The “cost” of lupus is tremendous and takes a toll on every aspect of patients’ lives. A recent U.S. study showed that lupus is associated with an economic burden of about \$3.2 billion every year.

- Systemic lupus erythematosus (SLE), commonly referred to as lupus, is a debilitating autoimmune disease that affects each person differently and can change over time. This complexity makes it one of the hardest diseases to diagnose and treat.
- In lupus, the immune system mistakenly attacks the body’s own tissues and vital organs. The most common symptoms include extreme fatigue, severe joint and muscle pain, fevers and skin rashes. These symptoms can come and go.
- According to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, a conservative estimate suggests 322,000 Americans have definite or probable SLE.ⁱ
- 90% of people who have lupus are women; typically diagnosed during childbearing years, ages 15-44.
- Lupus is two to three times more common and its symptoms tend to be more severe among African Americans, Hispanics, Latinos, Native Americans and Asians than Caucasians.
- Complications can be severe, leading to organ failure and even death. Lupus nephritis (kidney inflammation) is among the most common and serious complications.
- Among young black and Hispanic women ages 15-34, lupus is the 5th and 6th leading cause of death just behind cancer, heart disease and HIV.ⁱⁱ
- The cause of lupus is unknown. There is no single laboratory test that can definitively identify lupus. Yet, early detection and treatment can often lessen the progression and severity of the disease.

Research Offers the Best Source of Hope

- Just one drug specifically for lupus has ever been approved by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration, and more treatment options are urgently needed. Research is the only pathway to discover better ways to diagnose, prevent, control and ultimately cure this devastating disease.
- The Lupus Research Alliance, the world’s largest and most influential private funder of innovative research, has committed more than \$200 million for lupus research programs and issued 500+ research grants to find new treatments and a cure.

ⁱ Helmick CG, Felson DT, Lawrence RC, et al. Estimates of the prevalence of arthritis and other rheumatic conditions in the United States: Part I. *Arthritis Rheum.* 2008;58(1):15-25. PubMed PMID: 18163481. doi: 10.1002/art.23177. abstract

ⁱⁱ Yen EY, Singh RS. Lupus – An Unrecognized Leading Cause of Death in Young Females: A Population-Based Study Using Nationwide Death Certificates, 2000–2015. (*ARTHRITIS & RHEUMATOLOGY*, Vol. 70, No. 8, August 2018, pp 1251–1255) abstract