Lupus Foundation of Southern California

WHAT IS LUPUS?

Lupus is a chronic, inflammatory disease in which the body's immune system fails to serve its normal protective functions and instead forms antibodies that attack healthy tissues and organs. Lupus Foundation Market Research data show that up to 2 million people have been diagnosed with lupus, making it more prevalent than sickle cell anaemia, cerebral palsy, multiple sclerosis and cystic fibrosis combined. Lupus affects 1 in every 185 Americans, and although it can occur at any age, and in either sex, 90 percent of people with lupus are women in their childbearing years, which severely disrupts family life. Many more women than men have lupus. It is three times more common in African American women than in Caucasian women, and it is also more common in women of Hispanic, Asian and Native American descent.

You can't catch lupus from another person. It isn't cancer, and it isn't related to AIDS.

Systemic lupus, is dubbed "America's least-known major disease" by the national Lupus Alliance because the cause is unknown, the cure equally elusive.

Too few people understand the seriousness of this confusing and incurable disease, including the individuals who have it. Lupus symptoms-such as achy joints, fevers, extreme fatigue, hair loss and skin rashes-often are ignored because they mimic those of less serious illnesses.

THERE ARE THREE MAIN TYPES OF LUPUS

Systemic Lupus Erythematosus
(eh-RITH-eh-muh-TOE-sus) is the most common
Discoid Lupus Erythematosus
Mainly affects the skin. A
Drug-Induced Lupus
Medicine may appear
Lupus, the

Lupus is most common in women between the ages of 15 and 44. These are roughly the years when most women are able to have babies. Scientists think a woman's hormones may have something to do with getting Lupus. But it is important to remember that men and older people can get it too.

It is less common for children under age 15 to have Lupus. One exception is babies born to women with Lupus. These children may have heart, liver, or skin problems caused by Lupus.

Pregnancy can cause a flare in some women and should be discussed between the women and her doctor, and should be carefully considered and planned. With good care, most women with Lupus can have normal pregnancy and a healthy baby.