

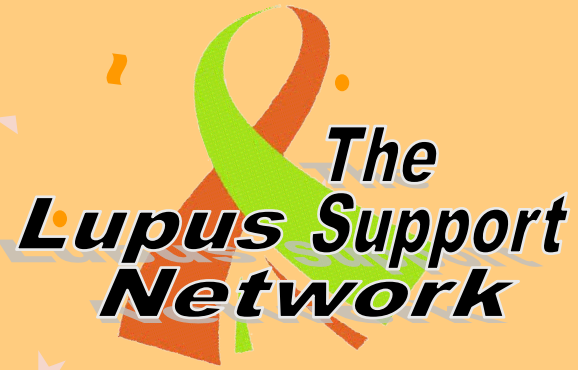
### How can you help someone with lupus?

The Lupus Support Network depends on donations from its members and the community to help local lupus patients with doctors visits and medicines. Anyone can help raise funds, even children. After finding out one of their fellow students at Brown Barge Middle school in Pensacola, FL was sick with lupus her classmates collected change and donated it to a very grateful foundation. If you want to organize a way to raise money to help the Lupus Support Network contact your teacher, parent or call our foundation today!



**CFC #'s for Donations:**  
46847

\*Previously: NW FL Lupus Foundation  
For more info on how to make a donation contact our office at: 850.478.8748 or 800.458.8211



**“Lupus Lewy”**

**Understanding  
lupus.....**

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# Understanding Lupus...



It is very scary when someone you love gets sick. The hardest part is not understanding what is wrong with them. This can be very scary and being scared is like being in the dark. If you are in your room, some place very familiar to you and a thunderstorm causes the lights to go out you're not very scared because you know where you are, but if you are not at home and the lights go out—WOW! It can be very scary!! Most of the time the



things that scare us are the things we don't understand. That is why when someone we care about gets sick it is important for us to know what is wrong, what can happen and how long the person is going to be sick.



There are all kinds of ways to be "sick", everyone has what the doctors call an "immune system" this is what we all have in our bodies to fight off the things that can make us sick like germs, bacteria's and viruses. An "immune system" is made up of our bodies cells and organs and their job is to "attack" the foreign invaders so that we don't get sick. But sometimes our "immune system" does not work like it is suppose to and can not fight off the things that attack our bodies and make us sick. Even adults "immune systems" might not be able to win the battle against different things that can make them sick.



Scientists have discovered all kinds of medicines and treatments to help us get better when we are sick. Well, except for the "common cold", no one knows why but the stubborn "cold" has put up a fight for centuries and all we can do is take medicines to make us feel better but it won't go away until it is good and ready! There are many diseases that scientists and doctors are still trying to find a cure for, like diabetes, cancer, lupus and many others—but for now—there is no cure!



Unfortunately for some people being sick is for the rest of their lives. People; children and adults can live with many illnesses the rest of their lives and as long as they do what the doctors tell them to do they will be okay. They will probably have to take medicine, and maybe even have to go into the hospital sometimes so that they can get certain kinds of medicine and tests to make them better that they can't take at home. The doctors and nurses try very hard to learn all they can about what is wrong with their patients so they can make sure their patients do not have to come to the hospital to stay but this is not always possible.



"Lupus" (**lew-pus**) is one of the diseases that can make people sick without a cure. Lupus is an autoimmune disease. Lupus means: "Wolf". In the 1850's, the doctors referred to lupus as the "wolf". They believed the rash that appears on the face of some lupus patients looked like the bite-mark of a wolf and because lupus can sneak up and attack you and make you feel terrible.



Normally, a person's immune system makes antibodies (**an-tie-ba-dees**). Antibodies are special chemicals that fight off infections caused by foreign invaders, like germs, that enter the body. But the immune system of a person with "lupus" gets confused and can not tell the difference between the foreign invaders and the body's own cells. So the immune system makes its own auto antibodies (**aw-toh-an-tie-ba-dees**) to attack the body's own cells. Picture your body's own immune system like an army with tanks attacking their own soldiers—not a good idea!!



There are three kinds of lupus:

**Systemic Lupus erythematosus** (**sis-teh-mik lew-pus er-eh-thee-muh-toh-sis**). This is also called SLE and it is the type most people know about. SLE is the most serious kind of lupus. It can affect the skin, joints, tendons, and other organs like the brain, heart, lungs, and kidneys.

**Discoid Lupus** (**dis-koid-lew-pus**) is a skin disease that causes a rash on the face, neck, scalp, and ears. It is a rarer form of lupus than SLE. It does not affect the organs the way SLE does, but the rash can leave scars.

**Drug-induced lupus** is caused by a reaction to some different kinds of medicines. Drug-induced lupus has the same affect on the body as SLE. But in most cases, once the person stops taking the medicine that is causing them to be sick the symptoms usually go away.

Lupus can be tough for other people to understand because lupus patients do not usually look sick on the outside. Some people even think lupus patients are pretending to be sick. People do not see the "battle" that is going on inside the body. Even though it does not look like it—most lupus patients feel like they have a really bad flu with joint pain, fever, headaches, nausea and they are very tired. All they want to do is go to bed and rest. One of the worse things about having lupus is that people think lupus is contagious, like a cold, but it is not—you will not get lupus from another person with lupus!!



Scientists and Doctors are still in the dark on what causes lupus. The doctors who have special training in diagnosing and treating autoimmune diseases like lupus are called rheumatologists (**roo-muh-tal-ih-jest**). Rheumatologists gather information from the patient about their health and run blood tests that can tell them if the patient has certain antibodies that are signs of lupus. There is no specific "test" for lupus like there is for strep-throat or some other diseases so it can take a long time to get a diagnosis.

Approximately 40% of the people who have lupus are sensitive or allergic to the sun.



Lupus patients should be very careful when they are going to be outside. The most dangerous time to be outside is between 9am and 4pm. Lupus patients should wear sunscreen, and protective clothing while they are outside.

Even though scientists have not found a cure for lupus most lupus patients can lead a long and happy life if they follow their doctors instructions, take their medicine, stay out of the sun and get plenty of rest.