



EVERY WOMAN FLORIDA

Lupus

Lupus is a disease that can affect many parts of the body, including the skin, joints, heart, lungs, blood, kidneys, and brain. Normally, the body's immune system makes proteins, called antibodies, to protect the body against viruses, bacteria, and other materials that can make you sick. Lupus causes your antibodies to attack your own cells and tissues and not just the bacteria and viruses. **For most people, Lupus is a mild disease affecting only a few organs. For others, it may cause serious and even life-threatening problems.** It can cause severe joint and muscle pain, extreme exhaustion, fevers, skin rashes, and can lead to organ failure and death. As many as 16,000 Americans develop Lupus each year.

Lupus can affect people of any age, but it develops mostly in young women. Sometimes pregnancy can make a woman with Lupus get sicker or cause her baby to be born too early. **If you are very sick from Lupus, you should avoid getting pregnant until your symptoms have improved.** If you have Lupus, see your health care provider regularly. They can help you decide when pregnancy would be safe for you.

Keep in Mind

- Women with mild symptoms of Lupus can have a healthy pregnancy and baby.
- If you have Lupus, you should talk to your health care provider **BEFORE** getting pregnant to develop a plan for lowering the chance of problems in pregnancy.

Health Care Provider Instructions

My Next Steps

- I will make a promise to take care of myself by making sure my Lupus disease is being treated.
- I will work with my health care provider to develop a plan for my Lupus treatment and follow the plan as recommended.
- I will talk to my health care provider before I become pregnant so that he or she can help me make decisions about my Lupus treatment so that my pregnancy will be as healthy as possible.
- Should I get pregnant, I will talk to my health care provider right away about how my Lupus treatment may need to be adjusted.

References:

Lupus Foundation of America: <http://www.lupus.org/newsite/index.html>