



Lupus is one of the cruelest, most mysterious diseases on earth—an unpredictable and misunderstood autoimmune disease that ravages different parts of the body. It is difficult to diagnose, hard to live with and a challenge to treat.

### **What you need to know about lupus**

- Lupus is a complex disease that is hard to define. It strikes without warning, affects each person differently, and has no known causes or cure.
- Lupus symptoms can be severe and highly unpredictable and can damage any organ or tissue, from the skin or joints to the heart or kidneys.
- Living with lupus can be baffling and isolating, as symptoms mimic other illnesses and often do not cause people to look sick.
- While lupus can be disabling and potentially fatal, in many cases the most serious health effects can be managed through aggressive medical treatment and lifestyle changes.
- A majority of people with lupus (63 percent) report being incorrectly diagnosed. Of those reporting an incorrect diagnosis, more than half of them (55 percent) report seeing four or more different health care providers for their lupus symptoms before being accurately diagnosed.
- People with lupus take on average nearly eight prescription medications to manage all of their medical conditions.
- Despite the widespread prevalence of lupus, research on the disease has remained underfunded, relative to its scope and devastation.
- Only one drug has ever been developed specifically to treat lupus and approved by the US Food and Drug Administration.

### **Who has lupus**

- An estimated 1.5 million Americans have lupus.
- Lupus can strike anyone at any time, but 90 percent of the people living with lupus are women.
- Lupus usually develops between ages 15 and 44, and lasts a lifetime.
- Lupus is two to three times more prevalent among women of color -- African Americans, Hispanics/Latinos, Asians, Native Americans, Alaska Natives, Native Hawaiians and other Pacific Islanders -- than among Caucasian women.

Visit [lupus.org](http://lupus.org) to learn more about lupus and how you can show your support.