

## Facts About Lupus Nephritis

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- Lupus is an autoimmune disease that affects 1.5 million adults in the United States.<sup>1</sup> Autoimmune means that the immune system attacks the body's own tissues and organs.
- Nine out of 10 people who have lupus are women. Lupus also occurs most often during childbearing years (ages 15-44).
- Lupus nephritis is a type of kidney disease caused by lupus. In adults who have lupus, 5 out of 10 (50%) will have kidney disease.<sup>2</sup> Kidney damage may be mild or severe.
- The symptoms of lupus nephritis include swelling (legs, feet, or ankles), weight change (gain or loss), tiredness, urine that looks brown or foamy, making less urine than normal, and/or high blood pressure.
- Tests for lupus nephritis include a urine test, blood tests, and kidney biopsy.
- The treatments for lupus nephritis include immunosuppressive drugs (medicines that partly "turn off" the immune system) and medicines that can help with kidney damage called ACE inhibitors or ARBs.
- Diet changes for lupus nephritis may include reducing salt and protein and eating lower fat, heart healthy foods.
- Low impact exercise, such as walking and swimming, may have physical and emotional benefits for people with lupus nephritis. (check with your doctor before starting an exercise plan)
- Severe lupus nephritis can make the kidneys stop working. Between 1 and 3 out of every 10 people with lupus nephritis will develop kidney failure.<sup>3</sup>
- If the kidney fails, treatment options include dialysis or kidney transplant.

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<sup>1</sup>Lupus Foundation of America. Lupus facts and statistics. <https://www.lupus.org/resources/lupus-facts-and-statistics>. Published October 6 2016. Accessed June 8 2020.

<sup>2</sup>National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Disease. Lupus and Kidney Disease (Lupus Nephritis). <https://www.niddk.nih.gov/health-information/kidney-disease/lupus-nephritis>. Published January 2017. Accessed June 8 2020.

<sup>3</sup>American Kidney Fund. Lupus nephritis. <https://www.kidneyfund.org/kidney-disease/other-kidney-conditions/lupus-nephritis.html>. Published 2020. Accessed June 8 2020.