Facts About Lupus Nephritis

• Lupus is an autoimmune disease that affects 1.5 million adults in the United States.¹ 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.² 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.³

• If the kidney fails, treatment options include dialysis or kidney transplant.

