

# LUPUS NEWS BULLETIN

Tips and information from the Lupus Center at Brigham and Women's Hospital

Fall/Winter 2014-15

[www.brighamandwomens.org/rheumatology/lupus/](http://www.brighamandwomens.org/rheumatology/lupus/)

## Pregnancy In Lupus By Dr. Bonnie Bermas

For many years, women with lupus were often counseled against pursuing pregnancy. Fortunately, with improvement in care for lupus patients and better outcomes this is no longer the case. Most women with lupus can attempt pregnancy and expect a good outcome.

Women with lupus have slightly decreased fertility when compared with those who do not have this disorder. Some of this is due to the co-existing presence of antiphospholipid antibodies. Women who have received cyclophosphamide therapy, most often for lupus kidney



disease, may have decreased ovarian function and find it more difficult to conceive. While there does appear to be an increase of flare rate during pregnancy, this is mainly in women

who have had prior kidney disease or nervous system involvement are the most likely to flare. For this reason, women with these disease manifestations should have their symptoms under control for six months prior to getting pregnant. Women with other symptoms, joint and skin findings for example, do not flare more during pregnancy than at other times.

There are some potential pregnancy complications that are more common in lupus pregnancy including preeclampsia, premature deliveries and lower birth weight infants. This is particularly true in those women with active disease at the time they get pregnant.

The best way for lupus patients to have a good pregnancy outcome is to work with their healthcare providers. A team approach that includes your rheumatologist and obstetrician (often a high-risk specialist) is crucial. Making sure that your disease is under good control on medications that can be used safely during pregnancy prior to conception is an important step in keeping mother and baby safe and healthy. With careful planning and a team approach, most women with lupus can safely attempt pregnancy.

### Ask the doctor **DR. BONNIE BERMAS**

#### If I have lupus, should I exercise?

Exercise is important for patients with lupus. Regular exercise is one of the proven interventions to decrease fatigue, a large issue for many lupus patients. Exercise also helps patients maintain a healthy weight which in turn helps reduce coronary artery disease risk and is beneficial for the joints. Having said this, it is often a challenge for lupus patients to start and maintain an exercise program. Patients who have been ill have little reserve and will often complain of feeling worse after they exercise. I recommend three strategies to get you exercising and keeping with a program. First, choose something that is easy, not-expensive and that you enjoy doing. That can be walking, running, dancing, exercise tape etc... It does not matter what you do but you have to enjoy it enough to keep it up. Second, start slowly, build up slowly. Start with 5-10 minutes of exercise a day. Then add one minute a week. By the end of six months, you'll be able to do a 35-40 minute workout. Finally, if at all possible, find an exercise buddy. It is always easier to motivate yourself if you know that someone is counting on you meeting them. Plus, you get to socialize while you are exercising.

#### My doctor said I should stay out of the sun. Why?

Sunlight can trigger not only rashes in lupus patients but also lupus flares. Even short exposures like walking from the parking lot can be problematic. Lupus patients should wear high SPF sun block >30 all year long. In summer months, wearing a hat and light long sleeved shirts can help. While sun protective clothing is great, it is expensive. However, there are some sun-protective dye products that you can use on your own clothes to provide inexpensive alternatives.

### New Lupus Center Faculty Member

#### Candace Feldman, MD, MPH

We are happy to announce that Dr. Feldman recently joined the Lupus Center faculty. She received her MD from the Yale University School of Medicine and her MPH from the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health. She completed her residency in internal medicine and fellowship in rheumatology both at Brigham and Women's Hospital.



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## Active Clinical Trials

**EMBRACE: Subjects of African descent with active lupus will receive either IV belimumab (Benlysta) or placebo.**

**Contact: Dr. Massarotti at 617-732-6523 or [emassarotti@partners.org](mailto:emassarotti@partners.org).**

**ALLURE: Subjects with active lupus nephritis (kidney disease due to lupus) will receive IV abatacept or placebo in addition to mycophenolate mofetil (MMF; Cellcept).**

**Contact: Dr. Elena Massarotti at 617-732-6523 or [emassarotti@partners.org](mailto:emassarotti@partners.org)**

## Upcoming Lupus Foundation of New England Events

- 4th Annual RI Walk at Slater Park (June 2015)
- Marlboro Country Clubg Womens Association Charity Tournament for LFNE (July 2015)
- 23rd Annual Lupus Walk on the Charles (September 2015)

## Lupus Center Faculty Contact Information

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