



# Lupus News

Tips and information from the BWH Lupus Center

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## Early Lupus Research Interests and Opportunities

The BWH Lupus Center is actively conducting a variety of research projects on lupus, including studies on early identification. We are still learning about how the immune system works in the early stages of lupus and our goal is to identify biological markers for onset and progression in early lupus patients. A better understanding of biological markers may also allow more targeted and effective drugs to treat lupus and matching of specific drugs for different sorts of lupus. Precisely defining the biological mechanisms of lupus is necessary to develop more effective and less toxic therapies.

- Systemic Lupus Associated T Cell Effects (SLATE) is a study sponsored by the Lupus Research Alliance & NIH-NIAID National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases to learn more how treatments and diagnostics can be improved for people with new onset lupus. Participants in the SLATE study provide blood samples and survey responses over the course of five visits in two years. If you were diagnosed with lupus within the past year and are not taking immunosuppressive medications or have had lupus for longer than a year and have active disease, please contact Eilish Dillon at [edillon2@bwh.harvard.edu](mailto:edillon2@bwh.harvard.edu) for more information. Most of the study visits will happen directly after regular clinical visits with the treating rheumatologist. Participants will receive a parking voucher for each visit.
- Pre-Lupus Immune Signature (PRELIMS) is a study sponsored by the US Department of Defense being conducted for patients who have some manifestations of lupus but have not been diagnosed and are not receiving immunosuppressive medications. This study involves blood collection and questionnaire data for up to two years. If this applies to you and you are interested in participating, please contact [Alice Horisberger](mailto:Alice.Horisberger@bwh.harvard.edu) at 617-525-1105 or go directly to <https://redcap.link/7oco8a6g> to learn more. Most study visits will happen directly after regular clinical visits with the treating rheumatologist. Participants will receive a parking voucher at each visit and remuneration of \$40 after the second study visit.

This research and the work of the BWH Lupus Center team members allows the multidisciplinary BWH Lupus Center team of rheumatologists, cardiologists, and nephrologists to provide our patients with the most up-to-date care and treatment options. If you would like to be considered in any future research studies that may apply to you, please email [eoakes@bwh.harvard.edu](mailto:eoakes@bwh.harvard.edu). ♦



## Brigham and Women's Hospital

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To support us:  
<https://tinyurl.com/DonateBWHLupusCenter>

To learn more about our  
Lupus Research Program:  
<https://lupus.bwh.harvard.edu/>

## Updated CDC COVID-19 Recommendations

In early August, the CDC announced [its new COVID-19 guidelines](#), shifting their focus to how people can *prevent severe infection* rather than the spread of the virus. The CDC does not recommend dropping all precautionary measures. The new guidelines stress vaccination to prevent infection rather than *requiring* regular testing, quarantining for people who have been exposed, mask-wearing and social distancing.

We know that this can be confusing and challenging for people with lupus. In general, people with lupus are at a higher risk for COVID-19 infection and severe illness. Lupus affects each person differently, and someone's risk level will vary due to disease activity and the medications they take.

We suggest that the best ways to protect yourself in the current environment are to:

- Get vaccinated and stay up to date on the recommended boosters. The current

*continued on page 2*

## Get Involved: Upcoming Events and Support Groups

### Vozzy's Legacy for Lupus Golf Tournament

We are happy to announce that the 10th Annual Vozzy's Legacy for Lupus Golf Tournament will take place on Monday, September 26th at Butter Brook Golf Club in Westford, MA. To register or learn more, visit [www.VozzysLegacyForLupus.com](http://www.VozzysLegacyForLupus.com).

### 2022 Walk to End Lupus Now, Boston

The 2022 Walk to End Lupus Now, supported by the Lupus Foundation of America, will take place in-person on Saturday, October 15th at the Boston Commons. To make a team, register, or fundraise, visit [support.lupus.org](http://support.lupus.org) or email Michele Insley at [Insley.lupus.org](mailto:Insley.lupus.org).

### Lupus Lights New England

Lupus Lights New England is a peer-led support group for patients and families/caregivers impacted by lupus supported by the Lupus Foundation of America and the BWH Lupus Center. Meetings are typically held virtually on the 4th Wednesday of each month at 7pm. To get involved, contact [lupuslightsne@gmail.com](mailto:lupuslightsne@gmail.com). ♦

### Updated CDC COVID-19 Recommendations, continued

recommendations for patients taking immunosuppressant medications are for up to FIVE vaccines- an initial series of three mRNA vaccines and two boosters. Look for the new COVID vaccine this fall!

- Encourage the people around you to be aware of your health status and take steps to protect themselves and you--in particular to get vaccinated!
- Talk to your doctor about medications to prevent and treat COVID-19 and have a plan for what to do if you get sick.
- Evusheld is a monoclonal antibody injection for those who are immunosuppressed who may not make good antibody responses to the vaccines.
- Paxlovid is an anti-viral medication that can prevent severe COVID-19 if you take it soon after you turn positive.
- If you start having symptoms, get tested right away. Medications for COVID-19 work best when given early.
- Trust yourself. If you feel uncomfortable or unsafe about a gathering or event and you can stay home, then do so. You have every right to look after your health. Masking and social distancing do still work! ♦

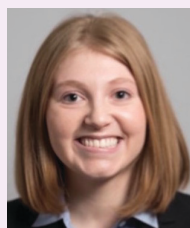
## Physician Spotlight: Deepak Rao, MD, PhD



The BWH Lupus Program would like to highlight Dr. Deepak Rao for his nomination to present the Edmund L. Dubois, MD, Memorial Lecture on Lupus at the upcoming American College of Rheumatology Convergence in Philadelphia! Dr. Rao is a rheumatologist and researcher who sees patients in the BWH Lupus

Center. He completed his MD and PhD in Immunobiology at Yale University School of Medicine and trained in internal medicine and rheumatology here at BWH. He currently serves as the co-Director of the BWH Human Immunology Center. His current research focuses on understanding the immune cells that cause inflammation in lupus and rheumatoid arthritis. We are so thankful for all of Dr. Rao's hard work and look forward to hearing his talk in November!

## Meet our newest team members!



**Dr. Lauren Goldschen** is a third-year psychiatry resident at Brigham and Women's Hospital. Her clinical interests include understanding the unique psychological challenges, needs, and treatment considerations for patients diagnosed with lupus. We are happy to announce that Dr. Goldschen will be joining our team to connect our lupus patients with psychiatric services. If you would be interested, please contact your BWH rheumatologist.



**Eilish Dillon** graduated from University of Massachusetts Boston in Spring 2022 with a degree in biology. She is a research assistant in Dr. Deepak Rao's lab and manages patient recruitment, IRB related tasks, and sample processing. Eilish is originally from Yarmouth, Massachusetts. In her free time, she likes to play golf!



**Emily Sanchez** is a Research Intern at the Lupus Center working under Dr. Karen Costenbader. She is currently a senior at Harvard College studying Integrative Biology and Global Health and Health Policy. Emily intends to write a senior thesis relating to the development of lupus and disparities in diagnostic care for minority patients with lupus. Originally from Boulder, Colorado, Emily enjoys running, biking, and hiking in her free time.

## LUCIN – Clinical Research Network

The BWH Lupus Center is participating in the Lupus Research Alliance's clinical research network, LUCIN (Lupus Clinical Investigators Network). The goal of LUCIN is to facilitate lupus clinical trial and studies, including trials of new therapies and treatment options. If you would like to be directly contacted about BWH Lupus study opportunities, please contact Emily Oakes at [eoakes@bwh.harvard.edu](mailto:eoakes@bwh.harvard.edu).



## Thank you for joining us at our Spring Lupus Forum!

The BWH Lupus Center hosted the annual Spring Lupus Forum virtually in June, co-sponsored by the Lupus Foundation of American and Sportmen's Tennis and Enrichment Center. Physicians of the Lupus Center--Dr. Karen Costenbader, Dr. Paul Hoover, Dr. Brittany Weber, and Dr. May Choi--and other invited guests, including Dr. Jennifer Lerner, Luna Hote, and our patient panelists, spoke on a variety of important topics in lupus. Presentation topics included new medications and trials, cardiovascular disease, navigating life with lupus, and gentle yoga exercises. We thank our panelists and speakers for their participation, as well as our patients for making the forum so well-attended. A recording of the forum can be found at <https://lupus.bwh.harvard.edu/community/latest-news/>.

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