

# Lupus and Pregnancy

Lupus Foundation of America, Indiana Chapter

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## Mission

The Lupus Foundation of America, Indiana Chapter is part of a national force devoted to solving the cruel mystery of lupus while providing caring support to those who suffer from its brutal impact.

## Efforts

Support research and conduct education programs so everyone affected by lupus can have an improved quality of life and get answers and health professionals know about new means to diagnose and manage the disease.

Conduct activities to increase awareness of lupus, rally public support for those who are affected by lupus, and advocate on their behalf.

## About Lupus & Pregnancy

Lupus is a chronic autoimmune disease that can damage any part of the body. Although many lupus pregnancies will have no complications, all lupus pregnancies are considered “high risk”—meaning problems may occur and must be anticipated. The best time to be pregnant is when you are doing well with your health. Women whose lupus is in remission have much less trouble with pregnancy than women whose disease is active.

## Facts & Statistics

Pregnancy is no longer considered an impossibility if you have lupus.

Your chances for a successful pregnancy are excellent if you plan properly—when lupus symptoms are in remission—and your rheumatologist and specialists in maternal-fetal medicine monitor you closely.

About 2 in 10 pregnant women with lupus get preeclampsia,<sup>2</sup> a serious condition that must be treated right away.

## Risk Factors

- ✓ Pre-existing or present hypertension
- ✓ History or presence of kidney disease
- ✓ History of previous preeclampsia
- ✓ History of low platelets
- ✓ History of blood clots
- ✓ History or presence of antiphospholipid antibodies

## To Avoid Pregnancy Complications

- ✓ See your rheumatologist at least once every trimester—more often if you have a lupus flare. If you have a flare, you may need to be treated with prednisone, which does not cross the placenta except at high doses.
- ✓ See your perinatologist and obstetrician regularly and frequently, and follow their instructions about rest, exercise, diet, and medications.
- ✓ Pay very close attention to what your body is telling you and tell your doctors about anything that does not seem right.
- ✓ Make the right lifestyle choices: Do not smoke, drink alcohol, or take recreational drugs, and limit caffeine.

## If you have lupus and are planning to start a family, you should...

- ✓ Talk to your doctor about banking if you are being treated with cytotoxic medicines.
- ✓ Make healthy lifestyle choices.
- ✓ Develop a network of friends and neighbors
- ✓ Maintain a steady, healthy workplace.
- ✓ Engage a positive self-talk.
- ✓ Reassign household responsibilities as needed.

**"With passion and perseverance, we will fulfill our purpose as an organization. That purpose is to be a resource for and support to lupus patients, and to ultimately live in a world without lupus."**

- La Toija Snodgrass, CEO