Lupus Wellness Program

Helping lupus patients optimize their quality of life through disease education and counseling.

A lupus diagnosis has been rendered and some initial treatment steps outlined. So, now what? A host of questions typically swirl in the heads of newly diagnosed lupus patients as they contemplate a future living with the disease.

Fortunately, with some adjustments to patients’ daily routines, most can lead normal lives. Yale’s Lupus Wellness Program provides the education, answers, and guidance patients need to optimize their quality of life.

The program provides patients with essential information about lupus that is tailored to each individual’s specific disease profile. Meeting one-on-one with a rheumatology nurse practitioner, patients learn:

- How the disease affects their bodies
- How to recognize lupus symptoms
- Why an appropriate treatment regimen (their specific regimen) is important
- Participants also receive counseling on:
  - Self-advocacy and participation in care decisions
  - Adherence to treatment regimens
  - Preventive practices
  - Coping mechanisms
  - Community support services

Additionally, the Lupus Wellness Program hosts support group meetings and workshops throughout the year at which participants can meet others with lupus and learn about nutrition, exercise, and stress reduction techniques. The goal of these gatherings is to provide a safe and supportive environment for group learning, and to open avenues of peer support and networking to reduce stress and enhance coping.

Yale’s Lupus Wellness Program is an especially important resource for those newly diagnosed with lupus or those who are transitioning from a pediatric to an adult rheumatology practice.
The program is offered in both English and Spanish.

The Lupus Wellness Program is based on the belief that patient education is a cornerstone in the management of lupus. Empowering lupus patients with the right information, tools, and support can make all the difference in their quality of life and long-term health outcomes.

**Goals**

- To educate and empower people with lupus to maximize their health and psychological well-being.
- To aid them in navigating healthcare system and community services.
- To educate and support caretakers and family members to maximize their success in promoting wellness.

**Impact**

- Dozens of people have been enrolled in the Lupus Wellness Program since June 2015.
- Twenty young adults have transitioned from Yale’s pediatric to adult lupus programs with assistance from the Lupus Wellness Program.
- The Lupus Wellness Program has hosted support groups meetings, which have engaged numerous additional patients.
- A nutritionist and social worker were added to the program in 2016.
- The Lupus Wellness Program is collaborating with the Lupus Foundation of America, Connecticut Chapter, in providing information to patients.

**Leadership**

![Jacinta Renaldi, MSN, APRN](image)

Ms. Renaldi, a family nurse practitioner, leads the Lupus Wellness Program in the Section of Rheumatology of the Department of Internal Medicine at Yale School of Medicine. She began her career in nursing in 2004 and began practicing rheumatology in 2009. She has a special interest in the treatment of lupus and other connective tissue disorders. In addition to leading the Lupus Wellness Program, Ms. Renaldi is a key member of the section’s Transition of Care Program for young adults with rheumatic disease.

**You Can Make a Difference**

Generous gifts are making these accomplishments possible. But much more needs to be done. Your philanthropy can help the Lupus Wellness Program expand and develop its services, ensuring that those living with lupus and their families are provided with the tools and resources necessary to succeed. To learn more, please contact Erin Shreve in the Office of Development at (203) 436-8529 or erin.shreve@yale.edu. Thank you for your interest in partnering with us.