



Allergy, Immunology, & Rheumatology  
University of Rochester Medical Center

# IQ LUPUS NEWSLETTER

For the latest lupus news and information

Volume 3, Number 3: Fall 2022

## In this Issue

Covid Vaccine & Booster Updates

Schedule Your Flu Shot

Lupus and Kidney Disease

Research News: Studies Show Benefits of Walking in Lupus

Healthy Recipe to Try: Turkey or Chicken Chili

Upcoming Events: Lupus Education Day

## Covid Vaccine & Booster Updates

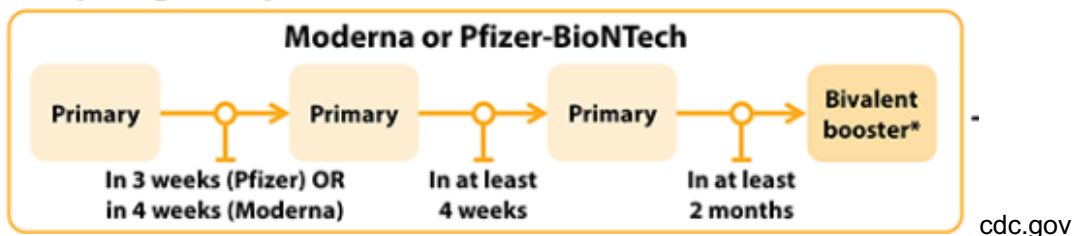
You may have heard that there is a new bivalent Covid-19 booster. Moderna and Pfizer have developed a booster that includes protection from the original Covid-19 strain and the omicron variant (BA.4 & BA.5). This booster should provide improved protection against the virus.

If you have already received a booster dose, the CDC recommends that you receive the updated booster shot. If it has been 2 months since your last dose, whether it was the primary series or booster, you can receive the bivalent booster shot.

If you recently had covid, the CDC recommends waiting 3 months before getting the new booster shot.

Remember, if you are an adult and moderately or severely immunocompromised, the CDC recommends 3 doses of the primary series, followed by a booster shot.

## People ages 12 years and older



## Schedule Your Flu Shot

It's that time of year again—cold and flu season! We recommend getting your yearly flu shot now at your doctor's office or pharmacy.

Let's review some commonly asked questions:

### **I'm worried the flu shot will cause me to feel sick or give me the flu, what should I do?**

- The flu vaccine has an inactivated or “killed” virus and it cannot give you the flu. The most common side effect is pain in the arm at the site of injection. You may also experience a mild fever, headache, or feel fatigued. In general, these symptoms are less severe and last for a shorter period of time than if you were to contract the flu.

### **Will the flu shot cause me to have a flare?**

- In general, vaccinations should not cause lupus to become more active.

### **I've heard that you can still get the flu even after getting vaccinated, is this true?**

- Yes, you can still get the flu if you come in contact with the virus, but those that are vaccinated generally have milder symptoms, and are able to fight off the infection better than those that are not vaccinated.

### **Will the medications I take for lupus affect how well the vaccine works in protecting me against the flu?**

- In general, medications for lupus will not affect how the vaccine works. Certain medications, like high dose steroids or Rituxan, can affect the vaccine response, so we recommend talking to your rheumatologist regarding timing of the vaccines if you are on these medications or about to start one of these medications.

***Health officials are predicting a strong flu season this year—protect yourself with the flu shot!***

# Lupus & Kidney Disease

Lupus is an autoimmune disease, where your immune system attacks your own body's cells and organs. When lupus attacks the kidneys, it is called Lupus Nephritis.

Lupus Nephritis occurs in about 50% of patients with Systemic Lupus Erythematosus (SLE).

Minority groups such as Hispanics or African Americans are more likely to develop Lupus Nephritis.

## **Kidneys Have Many Functions in the Body, they:**

- Make urine
- Remove wastes and extra fluids from your body
- Control your body's chemical balance
- Help control your blood pressure
- Help keep your bones healthy
- Help you make red blood cells

## **The Importance of Lab Monitoring**

Symptoms of lupus nephritis can be difficult to notice when it first starts to occur in the body.

One of the reasons we request that patients provide urine samples every 3 months is to monitor for protein in the urine, as this is one of the best biomarkers for assessing if lupus is affecting the kidney.

When lupus attacks the kidney it affects the structures in your kidneys that filter out waste. Inflammation begins to occur in the kidney and protein leaks into the urine.

Blood work is also important in evaluating kidney function and to look for signs of lupus flare.

### **Symptoms of Lupus Nephritis**

- Fatigue
- Swelling in lower leg, eyes, face, abdomen
- High blood pressure
- Frothy urine or blood in the urine
- Other symptoms typical of an individual patient's lupus flares such as rash or joint pain, pleuritic chest pain

## **Treatment of Lupus Nephritis**

The primary goal of treatment is to control inflammation in the kidney and stop irreversible damage to the kidney.

The rheumatologist will review all urine and blood labs and assess the patient in person. Often a referral to a nephrologist (kidney doctor) is also completed.

A kidney biopsy may be necessary to help determine how severe the disease is. A kidney biopsy is when a small amount of kidney tissue is taken and analyzed in a lab.

Lupus nephritis is divided into 6 different stages or classes and each class represents a different stage of chronic kidney disease.

## **Medications to Treat Lupus Nephritis**

If the kidney biopsy shows early disease (class I or II), treatment is focused on managing lupus.

If the kidney biopsy shows advanced disease (class III-V) the rheumatologist may prescribe:

- **Steroids:** IV initially, then by mouth with a gradual taper
- **Immunosuppressants:** such as Mycophenolate (Cellcept), Cytoxan, or Rituxan
- **Hydroxychloroquine:** will be continued if tolerated
- **Blood pressure medications:** if necessary to treat high blood pressure

## Research News: Studies Show Benefits of Walking in Lupus

A study with individuals with lupus that participated in a 6 week walking program, where 85% of participants went for a walk atleast 3 days per week (for about 30 minutes) noticed improvement in their pain, fatigue, and stiffness.

### Let's get Walking!

Ask a friend or family member to walk with you

Too cold outside?

Try walking a track inside a local gym, a treadmill, or walk the mall!

## Healthy Recipe to Try: Turkey or Chicken Chili

Turkey and chicken are leaner meats that provide protein with less fat. The best part about chili is that you can put any ingredients and spices in there that you like.

Brown your meat, add your other ingredients, and let it simmer for an hour.

- 2 teaspoons olive oil
- 1 yellow onion, chopped
- 1 medium red bell pepper, chopped
- 1 pound lean ground turkey or chicken (93-98%)
- 4 tablespoons chili powder
- 2 teaspoons ground cumin
- 1 teaspoon dried oregano
- 1/4 teaspoon cayenne pepper (optional)
- 1/2 teaspoon salt, plus more to taste
- 1 (28-ounce) can diced tomatoes or crushed tomatoes
- 1 1/4 cups chicken broth
- 2 (15 oz) cans dark red kidney beans, rinsed and drained
- 1 (15 oz) can sweet corn, rinsed and drained



## Upcoming Events: Lupus Education Day

Please join us in person or via zoom on Saturday November 19<sup>th</sup>! Invitations are in the mail!

Please contact IQ Lupus team members Jen or Kelly with any questions:

Jen: 585.369.5028

Kelly: 585.301.5557

### *In Memory of Ana Daniels*

In July of this year, we unexpectedly lost a co-worker and friend, Ana Daniels. Ana worked as an administrative staff member in our division, and has been working side by side with the IQ Lupus team for many years. Ana had a passion for helping others. Ana connected the IQ Lupus team to a local radio station so we could educate the community about lupus. She graciously donated when we arranged gifts for patients and families around the holidays. She helped distribute these newsletters, and so much more. She is greatly missed.

Allergy, Immunology & Rheumatology Division  
Department of Medicine  
University of Rochester Medical Center  
601 Elmwood Avenue, Box 695  
Rochester, New York 14642

