

LUPUS
CANADA
Life Without Lupus



What's your lupus story? We'd love to hear it. *Send us your thoughts and experiences to be featured in Lupus Canada's national monthly e-newsletter. Email your stories to leanne.mielczarek@lupuscanada.org*

A Month to Spread Love & Support
FEBRUARY E-NEWSLETTER

February is all about love, support and family! On February 14th, people all over the world will celebrate Valentine's Day, the international day of love. Although we tend to focus on appreciating a significant other, there are so many other people to show love to, whether it be your family, closest friends, and especially yourself! Taking some time to step back and appreciate everything you have achieved and how far you have come, especially as someone living with lupus, is so important and should not be overlooked.

In a few provinces some Canadians will celebrate Family Day within the first two weeks of February. This is one of Canadians' most cherished holidays, especially for kids in school who get a day off! Although the weather may still be chilly, there are so many ways to celebrate indoors and many local community events to look forward to. As a parent, sibling or child, this is a great day to forget about all of the other work that needs to get done and focus on the people who support you day in and day out. "Lupus and the Importance of Support" details just how important a helping hand can be in living with lupus, and how you can seek this from these special people in your life.



Lupus Canada is proud to announce that we were named one of Healthline's Best Lupus Nonprofits! Their editors carefully selected the most compassionate, actionable, and effective nonprofits that aim to help those they serve to achieve health and well-being. We are in the company of some other wonderful lupus organizations from around the globe.

<https://www.healthline.com/health/lupus/best-non-profits-lupus>

#ISangforLupusChallenge



Many thanks to everyone who attended the sold out **Mike on Much** live podcast event on January 19th. It was a great success! Special thanks to Shane Cunningham, Mike Veerman and Max Keerman for all their hard work to help create the much needed awareness for this debilitating disease.

For more information on

#ISangforLupusChallenge

visit www.lupuscanada.org

Lupus and the Importance of Support

When one is faced with an illness like lupus, having a support system to lean on is as important as having physicians, medications and treatments to rely on. Lupus is not only physically draining, it's emotionally draining. It's difficult enough to have to experience the fatigue, rashes, pain, and other assorted symptoms of it, but when you have to constantly explain lupus to people it can be severely draining to your spirit.

This is where the importance of a **support system** lies. A lupus patient needs to have at least one person who is unquestionably "there" for him or her, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, for whatever reason. When you're faced with a disease that lulls you into a false sense of security ("I haven't had a flare in a year!") only to slam you,

literally overnight, with symptoms so bad that you can't get out of bed, and the touch of sheets on your body drives you tears, you never know when you'll need that unconditional support!

A majority of lupus patients are young individuals - being young causes most of our closest support systems to be our families--Our parents and husbands, and in some cases, our children. It can be extremely difficult to get the ones we love so much to understand how we're feeling.

Parents of lupus patients frequently go into denial about their children's illness. It's difficult for them to accept the fact that their once lively and energetic child has such a draining disease. Additionally, when the question "Is lupus genetic?" comes up, parents may feel an unwarranted sense of guilt if they or someone else in their family has lupus, or symptoms of lupus. However, parents are usually the first ones that are there for their child in need, no matter how they may be dealing with their own feelings. There really is nothing like a parent's unconditional love for a child, and the lupus patient should realize that **parents** can be a wonderful fount of love and support!

Partners of lupus patients can also have a difficult time with understanding lupus and its effects on the person they care about. Day-to-day support is essential to the lupus patient, due to the unpredictable nature of the wolf. It can incapacitate the sufferer literally overnight, with little or no warning. The spouse or significant other also has to deal with feelings of guilt sometimes: "Is she having a flare because we went out too late last week?" "Is she sick because I don't do enough of the housework?" "Is the lupus affecting the way I see her?" These can be tough issues to deal with!

The major thing to remember when dealing with relationships with significant others is **communication**. It's fine to feel any emotion--It's how we deal with those emotions, and how they are perceived by our loved ones that makes a difference. For example, if a lupus patient is weaning off a round of steroids, it can make them tired, irritable, and subject to bouts of pain. These things can (understandably!) cause him/her to withdraw into themselves, without much time or energy to devote to her significant other. Without communication, the partner may feel ignored.

Children can be a wonderful source of support for the lupus patient. They don't even have to be yours! If you don't have children of your own, or friends or relatives with young children, I recommend volunteering at your local library or elementary school, even if it's just to read to children once a month. Children have an inexhaustible supply of energy, good nature, and joie de vivre that can lift one's spirit, and refresh one's soul! Spending some time with children can be an enlightening, and healing experience!

Of course, no article on support would be complete without mentioning the hundreds of professional, semi-professional, and just-plain-folks support groups available to lupus patient today. The LFA has many local chapters available to patients, and families, and there are many mailing lists, and other online support groups that can be accessed by lupus patients who are unable to leave their homes to attend meetings. There is no one who can understand lupus suffering like someone who's been there! Additionally, venting one's problems to someone who is likely to need

your supportive shoulder in the future, can assuage any feelings of "I don't want to bother anyone with this" syndrome! Take advantage of these programs if you can. The simple feeling of realizing that you're not alone can be overwhelmingly supportive, and by helping others in their struggle with the wolf, we often find that we are really helping ourselves.

Family Day Activities for Everyone

Source: <https://resources.lupus.org/entry/family-fun>

Living with lupus can limit the fun activities a family is able to share together. But, with preparation, adequate sun protection and collaboration with your medical team, there are still ways to enjoy time together. Visit your local zoo (be sure to apply sun protection), enjoy a tv, movie or games day, visit your local theater or museum.



Recipe: Taco Salad

Prep Time: 5 mins

Cook Time: 10 mins

Serves: 4

Ingredients:

Salad:

- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- 4 ounces Mexican chorizo, casing removed
- 5 cups chopped romaine lettuce
- 1/2 cup Del Monte® Whole Kernel Sweet Gold and White Corn, drained
- 1/2 cup canned black beans, drained and rinsed
- 1 roma tomato, diced
- 2 tablespoons chopped fresh cilantro leaves
- 1 avocado, halved, seeded, peeled and diced
- 1/4 cup shredded cheddar cheese, for garnish
- 1/4 cup tortilla strips, for garnish



Lime Vinaigrette:

- 1/4 cup olive oil
- 1/4 cup apple cider vinegar
- Zest of 1 lime
- 2 tablespoons freshly squeezed lime juice
- 2 teaspoons sugar, or more to taste

Directions:

1. To make the vinaigrette, whisk together olive oil, apple cider vinegar, lime zest and juice, and sugar in a small bowl; set aside.
2. Heat olive oil in a large skillet over medium high heat. Add chorizo and cook until dry and crisp, about 2 minutes, making sure to crumble the chorizo as it cooks; let cool.
3. To assemble the salad, place romaine lettuce in a large bowl; top with chorizo, corn, black beans, tomato and cilantro. Pour the dressing on top of the salad and gently toss to combine. Stir in avocado.
4. Serve immediately, garnished with cheese and tortilla strips, if desired.

The recipes used by Lupus Canada have been reviewed and approved by Heather Penney, Registered Dietitian.


Source: <http://damndelicious.net/2014/01/05/taco-salad/>


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