

UW Health: Starts state's only lupus clinic

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CONTACT: Emily Kumlien

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[\(608\) 265-8199](tel:(608)265-8199)

[\(608\) 516-9154](tel:(608)516-9154)

ekumlien@uwhealth.org

UW Health starts state's only lupus clinic

Madison, Wis. –In February, UW Health will start the state's only clinic dedicated exclusively to treating lupus patients.

Lupus is a chronic autoimmune disease, meaning the body's own immune system attacks parts of the body as if it were foreign. It can affect the skin, joints and multiple organs. Symptoms can include extreme fatigue, joint pain, rash and inflammation and in the most serious cases, lupus can lead to kidney failure, seizure or neurological complications including stroke.

Most patients see a rheumatologist, an arthritis and immune specialist, for lupus treatment, but the UW Lupus clinic will be uniquely offering comprehensive integrated care to lupus patients. According to the Lupus Foundation of America-Wisconsin Chapter, UW Health will be the only health care organization in Wisconsin to offer a comprehensive lupus clinic.

Appointments will include meetings with rheumatologists who are lupus specialists; social workers who will be instrumental in getting social, emotional and psychological support to patients and their families; and pharmacists to discuss medication plans in-depth. Dr. Shivani Garg, assistant professor of rheumatology in the University of Wisconsin School of Medicine and Public Health, will direct the clinic.

“This is a multisymptom disease commonly affecting young female patients and has a considerable impact on patient’s quality of life and ability to carry out normal daily activities,” said Dr. Garg. “The approach at the clinic will give better insight on the disease activity, patient’s perspective on disease activity and disease’s impact on activity level, work and social participation.”

According to The National Resource Center on Lupus, there are 16,000 new cases reported nationally each year, and the typical age range of people who develop the disease is 15-44. The overwhelming majority of lupus patients are females of minority race and ethnicity. The clinic aims to better meet needs of all patients.

Beginning Feb. 12, the clinic will run every other Monday morning and expand as needed. It will be located at UW Health’s 1 S. Park building in Madison. Those who seek an appointment should call [608-287-2800](tel:608-287-2800).