

# Lupus Update with Dr. Robert Katz

## **I have lupus - can I have a baby?**

Over the last few years, research has proven that women with lupus who remain healthy throughout their pregnancy generally have a healthy child. Serious concerns still exist and it's important to know as much as possible.

If you have lupus and are thinking about having a child, your primary concern should be the timing of the pregnancy. Studies have shown that when lupus is stable and not flaring, pregnancies generally go well. It's important to keep in touch with your lupus doctor to monitor your health as well as your OBGYN as your pregnancy progresses.

Problems with pregnancy in lupus patients include prematurity, exacerbation of the disease in the mother (particularly in patients who become pregnant when their lupus is active), and, rarely, complete heart block in the fetus related to Sjögren's A (sometimes also called Ro) antibodies in the mother.

Another problem for lupus patients is the medication restriction during pregnancy. Prednisone is judged to be okay, and some patients continue on hydroxychloroquine (Plaquenil) during pregnancy. Immunosuppressives, such as methotrexate, Imuran, Cellcept and Cytosan, can affect rapidly dividing cells, including the fetus, and are contraindicated except in some cases where the patient's vital organs or life are threatened.

So, yes, you can have a healthy child if you have lupus. However, it's important to know the facts and potential dangers involved.