

### President's Message

By Cathy Ferren



There is still time to register for the **Online Annual General Meeting** on Saturday May 9 through Zoom.

Registration URL <https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tJwlc-CsqjorGd0w5BXMxNsYV3QLfL-Q81po>

This month we have 2 great articles to help manage our psychological health. With stress affecting lupus in so many ways, I hope you will put some of the tips into your own daily routine. COVID-19 has added even more stresses to our lives.

With spring and summer upon us, please remember to protect yourself from the increase UV rays from the sun with sun block clothing, eye protection, sunscreen and the timing of your outdoor activities. It is very helpful in preventing flares and lessening the effect of flares.

If you or someone you know has talents or skills that would be useful on a committee or the board of directors, please contact the office. As volunteers, each one of us is given a unique opportunity to give back to the lupus community and to help the lives of those living with lupus.

### Walk for Lupus Ontario 2020

#### Walk for Lupus Ontario is Going Virtual!

We know many of you are looking forward to the 2020 Walk for Lupus Ontario. This is our biggest fundraiser and is a wonderful way to raise awareness in your community. Our prime objective is to keep everyone safe and healthy and to have an event that complies with provincial and municipal social distancing requirements.

We are targetting August 15th as the date when you can walk, run, or choose any activity you like in any location and to raise funds for lupus research and support and education programs.

You can register at [www.walkforlupusontario.org](http://www.walkforlupusontario.org) as in the past and ask your friends, work colleagues and family for support. You can promote your planned activities on social media and put out challenges to others to participate in their own locations. If you would like to be a community organizer for this virtual event, please reach out to [info@lupusontario.org](mailto:info@lupusontario.org).

COVID-19 may be keeping people apart, but the Lupus Ontario Virtual Walk will prove that we're a strong and supportive community - even when we are not physically together.

### Hope Volleyball 2020

#### Update on the Annual Hope Volleyball Tournament

Due to the current situation with COVID 19, the Hope Volleyball Tournament has been postponed from the original scheduled date of June 20th. The organizers are currently working with Polson Pier on other tentative dates later in the summer or the fall.

For anyone who has expressed interest in volunteering for this event, we will contact you with the latest information when it becomes available.

Lupus Ontario is very excited to be a charity partner for this event and we look forward to actively supporting it in the near future.

### Racing Thoughts

Written by Ravina Chen BSW

#### Racing Thoughts

Racing thoughts occur when our minds go into overdrive and we find it difficult to stop our inner voices. They often spring from anxiety, fear or other negative emotions and can be triggered by certain situations/dilemmas. The following are some techniques which can be employed to calm a racing mind.

**Focus on the here and now** – We should strive to direct our racing thoughts back to our present situation. If we always live in the past or future we will miss out on many enriching experiences and the joy of living. What will happen in the future is unknown for everyone in life and not worth losing our peace of mind over. By taking one confident step at a time we can take back control and live life how we choose to.

**Find your centre** – Combat racing thoughts by doing something that distracts you and holds your attention. Some people find solace in music or playing a musical instrument. We can create a playlist to use when faced with racing thoughts. Adult coloring books, painting or reading can be used to soothe our minds. The important thing is to find something that you genuinely like and throw your entire self into it.

**Challenge your thoughts with alternative thinking** – With each progressive negative thought try to actively think of alternative positive thoughts, for example, instead of thinking about your test results coming back worse than what you expected, imagine if they came back showing that your health is improving. Therefore, substitute worst-case scenarios with best-case scenarios.

**Use a mantra or positive affirmation** – We can redirect our racing minds by using a personal mantra or positive affirmation. It can be something simple such as, "Everything will work out for the best." By repeating it, we effectively start to block the other intrusive thoughts. The key is to use something that resonates within you, gives you hope and fills you with positivity.

**Practice deep breathing** – Slowing down our breathing by counting out loud, putting our hand on our hearts, or holding on to something such as a stress ball can help to calm our minds. Meditation techniques can be used to complement breathing exercises.

**Exercise** – Racing thoughts can be reduced or even forgotten through exercise since our bodies and minds become tired from physical activity. Additionally, working out can help us feel more positive and put us in a better frame of mind.

**Write it out** – Some people find it helpful to write their thoughts down since writing helps us to focus and make sense of what is happening in our minds. If we try to write down every thought in detail as it occurs, our minds will eventually start to slow down.

**Talk to someone** – Sometimes it can be difficult to deal with racing thoughts on our own and it can be helpful to have a trusted person with whom we can share our emotions and rely on for support without passing judgment. Talking to someone can also help us find some positive perspective on the battle going on in our minds.

It is important to note that what works for one person may not be suitable for another. In order to effectively tackle racing thoughts we should employ a combination of techniques and find which ones work best for us over time and with consistent practice. Always stay positive and keep in mind that racing thoughts are temporary and will be overcome no matter how difficult it may seem at times.

### Autogenic Relaxation for Stress and Pain Reduction

Written by the Support and Education Committee

This guided autogenic relaxation script guides you to relax your whole body by imagining that each part of your body is warm and heavy. Use this script to record your own relaxation audio or learn to relax.

Begin reading the relaxation script here: Find a comfortable position to sit or lie down. Autogenic relaxation is an effective relaxation technique that will allow you to relax your body and calm your mind.

## "Lupus Link" April 2020

Lupus Ontario, 21-25 Valleywood Drive, Markham, ON L3R 5L9 | 905-415-1099 or 1-877-240-1099

Begin by breathing deeply, drawing air in... deep into your lungs... and releasing the breath slowly.... Breathe in...2...3...4... hold...2...3... exhale...2...3...4...5... again breathe in ...2...3...4... pause...2...3... exhale...2...3...4...5... Continue taking slow, regular breaths.

Now turn your attention to your right hand. Feel the skin on the palm of your right hand becoming warm and relaxed. Feel the warmth in each finger....and on your palm....spreading to the back of your hand.... to your wrist.... Feel your right arm becoming warm..... Your right arm is starting to feel very heavy.... very heavy, and very relaxed. Your right arm is warm, heavy, and relaxed.

Now focus on your left hand. Picture placing your left hand into soothing, warm water. Feel the warmth relaxing your hand completely. Allow your wrist to enter the warm, calming water..... and relax. Your arm is becoming heavy. Allow your left arm to sink into the warm water. Your left arm feels warm, heavy, and relaxed. Continue the autogenic relaxation...

Now turn your attention to your legs. Feel your legs becoming warm. Feel the warmth spreading all the way from your feet.... to your ankles.... lower legs....knees....and hips. Feel your legs becoming heavy.... very heavy, and very relaxed. Your legs are warm....heavy....and relaxed... Imagine a warm breeze blowing across your face.... feel your face and head relaxing.... your eyelids are very heavy.... Continue the autogenic relaxation...

Picture the sun shining down on you....warming the front of your body..... allow your chest and stomach to relax in this warmth.... feel the sun shining....warming your skin....relaxing your body.... as your body is filled with heavy, warm, pleasant relaxation.

Now imagine sitting with your back to a pleasant campfire. Feel the warmth of the fire on your back. Feel your back warming and relaxing..... the warmth spreads all the way from your neck...to your shoulders.....your upper back....middle and lower back..... feel your body relaxing as it becomes warm and calm....

Feel the heaviness in your entire body.... your body is warm....heavy.... and relaxed... Enjoy this calm, relaxed feeling. Notice your smooth, even breathing.... relaxed and deep....drawing you even deeper into relaxation.... Your body feels very heavy....warm....and relaxed.... Enjoy the autogenic relaxation for a few more moments....

Now slowly begin to bring your attention back to the present.... keeping your eyes closed...notice the room around you.... notice the surface that you are lying or sitting on.... hear the sounds in your environment....

Gently start to reawaken your body.... wiggle your fingers and toes.... move your arms and legs a little.... stretch if you like....

When you are ready, open your eyes.... and become fully alert.

### Peer Support Groups

Lupus Ontario offers in person and online peer support groups.

Check the support page on the web site for schedules and locations. Peer support groups are a safe place to share your lupus journey and learn from others in the group what has worked for them. They are not therapy sessions. Check the Support page on the web site for locations and schedules. During COVID 19 we have online meetings only using Zoom. Imagine never having to leave the comfort of your safe place, no need to travel and not having to worry about the ever changing weather; join us for our live online audio/visual lupus peer support group.



You need to **REGISTER IN ADVANCE**. After registering, you will receive a confirmation email containing the link and information about joining the meeting. Provincial Meetings are 7 to 8 pm EST. The time varies for other online support meetings see <https://www.lupusontario.org/support/>

### Online Youth Group

Online Youth Group was held April 19 check the support page for upcoming online youth meetings.

Lupus Ontario, 21-25 Valleywood Drive, Markham, ON L3R 5L9 | 905-415-1099 or 1-877-240-1099

### Online Adult Group

May 12 click <https://zoom.us/meeting/register/tZUkcOiqrlszJ7xHTqf-RSrgjrFgsjDRA>

June 9 click <https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/uZUqcu2urj8vkEGZnlondVXoWBVujutNA>

### Durham Online Support Group

Contact Laura at [walkforlupusdurham@yahoo.ca](mailto:walkforlupusdurham@yahoo.ca)

## Lupus Education Days and Online Workshops

The Lupus Ontario Support and Education Committee organizes information and education events about lupus, treatment, coping and support.

**Lupus Education Days** or **LEDs** include a variety of speakers and presentations on lupus related topics. Whenever possible, an education day includes a rheumatologist, pharmacist, and other treatment professionals.

**Online workshops** are generally one (1) hour long online meetings with Q&A time at the end. Watch for a special workshop emails and social media posts. Details at [www.lupusontario.org/education/](http://www.lupusontario.org/education/)

Let us know if there is a particular topic you are interested in. We will do our best to find a suitable presenter on the topic.

## Nutrition: Eat To Beat Inflammation

Written by Rosanna Lee RD, PHEc, MHSc, BASc

### The anti-inflammatory diet focuses on key foods to help minimize the symptoms of chronic inflammatory disease.

Inflammation is a natural part of our body's immune system. When we get the flu or catch a virus, our immune system triggers an inflammatory response to defend against harmful invaders. When we have a wound, the inflammatory process is also activated to help repair our body's damaged tissues. Both cases are a form of acute inflammation, which means they are normally short-lived. With chronic inflammation the body can have abnormal, misplaced, and, or systemic inflammation for a prolonged time. This can have a negative impact on our tissues and organ function.



Today, inflammatory-related diseases like type 2 diabetes, asthma, heart disease, colitis, Crohn's disease, arthritis, Alzheimer's disease and vasculitis are more prevalent than ever. Atherosclerotic cardiovascular disease, cancer, and chronic obstructive lung diseases are among the most common inflammatory conditions worldwide and are among the leading causes of mortality.

### Causes of Chronic Inflammation

When acute inflammation from infections or injuries are left untreated chronic inflammation can ensue. Long-term exposure to irritants like pollution or industrial chemicals can also cause chronic inflammation. Several other factors may cause chronic inflammation – being overweight or obese, smoking, excess alcohol consumption, exposure to chronic stress, our environment (i.e. air pollution, chemicals), and some medications. Genetics undoubtedly plays a role in chronic inflammation, particularly when it comes to auto-immune diseases. Many autoimmune disorders linked to chronic inflammation include type 1 diabetes, rheumatoid arthritis, psoriasis/ psoriatic

arthritis, multiple sclerosis, lupus, inflammatory bowel disease, Addison's disease, Graves' disease, Sjogren's syndrome, Hashimoto's thyroiditis, vasculitis, pernicious anemia, and celiac disease.

### The Anti-Inflammatory Diet

The diet mimics some eating patterns found in the Mediterranean diet, which focuses on whole, nutrient-dense foods. An anti-inflammatory diet can help us maintain good health and keep our immune system in top shape. Foods rich in vitamin C, E, zinc and lean protein are your go-to nutrients for health maintenance.

Lupus Ontario, 21-25 Valleywood Drive, Markham, ON L3R 5L9 | 905-415-1099 or 1-877-240-1099

Vitamin C is found naturally in citrus fruits, cantaloupe, kiwi, papaya, mangos, pineapple, strawberries and blueberries. Vegetable sources of vitamin C include green and red peppers, broccoli, Brussels sprouts, cauliflower, spinach, tomatoes, and winter squash. Nuts and seeds provide great sources of vitamin E, while beans and lentils offer good sources of plant-based lean protein and zinc.

In general, the anti-inflammatory diet recommends less processed and refined foods, sugar-sweetened beverages, red meat (beef and pork), and fats like margarine, vegetable shortening and lard. Instead, the diet encourages wholesome foods – many which have antioxidant properties. Some research has found that these beneficial antioxidants protect our bodies against cell damage and inflammatory-related diseases caused by free radicals. Healthcare practitioners may also prescribe omega-3 and turmeric supplements for some individuals. If you are considering supplementation, connect with a registered dietitian to find the best regimen.

### Top Anti-Inflammatory Foods

- Dark leafy greens (spinach, arugula, mustard greens, kale, collard greens, Swiss chard, microgreens, Boston lettuce, romaine)
- Blueberries, blackberries, and cherries
- Dark grapes
- Oranges
- Tomatoes
- Cruciferous vegetables (broccoli and cauliflower)
- Avocados
- Olives
- Beans and lentils
- Green tea
- Red wine (moderate amounts – no more than 15 drinks a week for men, no more than 10 drinks a week for women or no more than 2 standard drinks per drinking occasion)
- Healthy fats – olive oil, flaxseed oil, canola oil
- Nuts – walnuts, pistachios, almonds, pine nuts
- Fish – salmon, sardines (those high in omega-3s)
- Spices – turmeric and cinnamon
- Dark chocolate
- Some healthy carbohydrates (whole grain breads, pastas, rice)

### References:

1. Butler, N. (2017, Dec 3). *Anti-inflammatory diet: What to know*. Retrieved from <https://www.medicalnewstoday.com/articles/320233.php>
2. Canadian Institutes of Health Research. (2018, Jan 2). *Inflammation in chronic disease*. Retrieved from <http://www.cihr-irsc.gc.ca/e/43625.html>
3. Dansinger, M. (2017, Jun 21). *Diabetes and inflammation*. Retrieved from <https://www.webmd.com/diabetes/type-2-diabetes-guide/inflammation-and-diabetes#1>
4. Dietitians of Canada. (2018, Sept 27). *Alcohol and nutrition*. Retrieved from <http://www.unlockfood.ca/en/Articles/Alcohol-and-smoking/Alcohol-and-Nutrition.aspx>
5. Donath, M.Y., & Shoelson, S.E. (2011). *Type 2 diabetes as an inflammatory disease*. *Nature Reviews Immunology*, 11(2): 98-107.
6. Eder, L., & Harvey, P. (2018, Feb 5). *Inflammatory diseases can increase risk of heart disease: Doctors' notes*. Retrieved from <https://www.thestar.com/life/2018/02/05/inflammatory-diseases-can-increase-risk-of-heart-disease-doctors-notes.html>

You can read more of Rosanna Lee's articles at [healthydirections.ca](http://healthydirections.ca)

### Mission Statement

Lupus Ontario is a team of caring and enthusiastic volunteers and staff who are passionately committed to helping those with lupus live longer and better by raising funds that deliver vital support, education, awareness and research.

### Goal: Life Without Lupus!