Six Celebrities With Lupus

by AMANDA BEST

Celebrities With Lupus: Their Struggles and Successes

Lady Gaga

Pop star Lady Gaga says lupus runs in her family and told Larry King in a 2010 interview that she had tested “borderline positive” for the condition, but that she didn't suffer from any lupus symptoms.

"As of right now I do not have it, but I have to take good care of myself," she said.

However, the performer does suffer from synovitis, a condition that causes inflammation in the lining of the joints and is often associated with lupus. Earlier this year she was forced to cancel several shows of her Born This Way Ball tour because of it, before canceling the tour altogether due to what she initially described as a labral tear, but turned out to be a broken hip.

As many as 20% of women test positive for the antibodies associated with lupus, but only 10% of them are diagnosed with lupus.

Nick Cannon

America's Got Talent host Nick Cannon made headlines when he was hospitalized with mild kidney failure in 2012 and subsequently diagnosed with lupus nephritis. The star was hospitalized again later in 2012, this time for blood clots in his lungs and an enlarged ventricle in his heart.

Rather than let the diagnosis slow his career, Cannon says the condition has had the opposite effect on him.

"It actually drives me," he told HuffPost Live earlier this year.

The actor and TV personality hopes to educate people about lupus and inspire those living with it. Following his first hospital stay he documented his recovery in a web series, saying he wanted others to know that "you don't have to let it stop you".

During the series Cannon talks about the changes he has made since his diagnosis, including stepping down from his radio show and diet changes like reducing his intake of potassium, salt and phosphorus.

Selena Gomez

Singer and former Disney star Selena Gomez sparked rumours that she was struggling with her health late in 2013, when she canceled the remaining shows in her Stars Dance tour, citing a need to "spend some time on myself".

Several months later her grandfather, Ricardo Gomez Sr., confirmed to RadarOnline that Selena Gomez was diagnosed with lupus a couple of years ago, and was receiving treatment.

“The doctor was telling her she needs to take some time out,” he said of her time away from music. “It’s just too much pressure what she’s going through."

Despite the singer's struggles, her grandfather said at the time that she was "getting along pretty good."

Gomez has since returned to the music scene, recently releasing a new single, "The Heart Wants What the Heart Wants," and indicating there's more on the way.

Seal

A number of theories have circulated about how British musician Seal received the scars on his face, including a knife fight, a car accident, and even an encounter with a wolf.

The "Kiss From a Rose" singer says people want the scars to be the result of a dramatic event, because "that's just the nature of the media and people's imaginations".

"People want the scars to be tribal scars," he once told *Jet* magazine.

But really, the marks on his cheeks are the result of discoid lupus, which causes sores on the skin. It typically targets the skin on the face and scalp, and when the sores erupt they cause deep scarring. A flare-up of Seal's lupus caused the scarring when he was 23. Seal's lupus is reportedly in remission and has been for years.

Discoid lupus also causes sensitivity to UV light, and 10% of sufferers will go on to develop systemic lupus.

Toni Braxton

Singer and actress Toni Braxton recently revealed her lupus diagnosis, which came after she collapsed on stage during a performance in Las Vegas in 2008.

In an interview with Healthmonitor in 2013, Braxton said her lupus targeted her heart. She now takes medication and has made some healthy changes to her lifestyle, including gentle daily exercise like walking on a treadmill.

The "Un-Break My Heart" singer says her doctors told her after a hospitalization in 2012 that she shouldn't be performing, but Braxton refuses to retire.

She manages by keeping her tours brief and cutting out as much stress as possible. To cope with stress the star listens to music and plays the piano, admitting that meditation and yoga didn't work for her.

Braxton once tweeted that the corticosteroid medication she takes makes most women gain weight, "but we’re still fabulous!" As Braxton knows, there are far more serious problems that come with untreated lupus.

Michael Jackson

Diagnosed with lupus in 1986, king of pop Michael Jackson adapted his style to protect his increasingly sensitive skin from the sun and its UV rays. His trademark hats, sunglasses, masks, and his habit of carrying an umbrella were all likely practical steps taken to avoid sun exposure and triggering a flare-up.

One of Jackson's doctors told Good Morning America in 2009 that Jackson, like Seal, had discoid lupus, and suggested that the pain caused by the condition and its complications may be why he struggled with addiction to prescription pain medications.

Additionally, the coroner's report following the star's death revealed that he had osteoarthritis in his fingers and

spine, as well as significant inflammation and scarring on his lungs; arthritis is common in people with lupus, while the lung damage could be a result of his lupus or his extensive use of the pain killer demerol.