5 Helpful Apps for Lupus Warriors

by ANNA SCANLON

Lupus? There's an App for That

Remember that 2009 Apple catchphrase? “There’s an app for that.” When it comes to lupus, it isn’t wrong.

In fact, there are several apps for lupus that you can use to help keep track of your symptoms and keep your condition under control. What did we do before technology?

The Lupus Companion

The Lupus Companion, created by The Lupus Initiative, is a tool to help you and your rheumatologist stay on the same page. This free app (which appears to be only available for Apple users) allows you to keep track of your symptoms and their severity, doctor’s appointments, medication and dosages, doctor’s names and contact information and get answers to simple questions about lupus.

You can choose to share this information with your doctor, who can view your disease activity on a graph. The app will also ask you to monitor your lupus activity every three months in order to help you stay on top of its progression and regression.

It can also be helpful in emergencies as it allows you to store all of your medical information in one place — in your phone that you always keep with you. I haven’t tried it personally, but the general consensus in the App Store is that it works well, but could use some improvement.

My Lupus Log

As The Lupus Companion seems to only be available for Apple users, it is only fair to include an app that is only available for Android users. My Lupus Log operates similarly to The Lupus Companion and has received mostly positive reviews. Developed by GlaxoSmithKline, a British pharmaceutical company, it attempts to empower lupus patients to take control over their symptoms.

With this app, you can both log your symptoms and record how they affected your daily life in a separate comments section. The app will present you with an easy to read graph, highlighting when you’ve had particular symptoms, like lupus foot pain for example, throughout a specific time period.

Each symptom can be rated on a scale of 1 to 5 in terms of severity. You can also set alerts and reminders to ensure that you log your symptoms.

The app contains a dictionary of lupus symptoms and key words to help you more accurately explain your illness to your friends and family.

Period Tracker

While this doesn't specifically have to do with monitoring your lupus, keeping track of your periods can be incredibly helpful. When used in tandem with a lupus app, you can figure out which symptoms may be attributed to your monthly cycle and which are attributed to lupus. You may even find that your lupus symptoms are exacerbated at certain times of the month.

With Period Tracker (available for both Android and Apple devices), you can take daily notes of symptoms, weight and moods. You can also keep track of when you have been intimate and when you are most fertile.

Next page: tracking your period, emergency features, and more apps for lupus.

Period Tracker

This is, obviously, particularly helpful for those women who are either trying to conceive or trying to avoid an unplanned pregnancy. You can also export your data to show the symptoms you are experiencing to your doctor.

The app will predict when your next period is, and for an extra $1.99, you can gain access to a chart to see your symptoms quickly and easily. The $1.99 deluxe version also offers users the chance to speak to other women about different women's health issues straight from the app. In both versions, it sits discretely on your phone or tablet with the label "P. Tracker."

You can get Period Tracker Lite for Android and Apple devices, and Period Tracker Deluxe for Android and Apple devices.

Emergency Setting/Health on the iPhone

Although not an app per se, this is a great feature built right into your iPhone that not many people are aware of. When you swipe to unlock your home screen, you are asked to enter your numeric passcode. On the bottom left of the screen is the word "Emergency."

Once you select it, it will take you to a virtual medical ID bracelet that gives vital statistics such as medications you are on, your blood type and emergency contacts. You can also indicate your health conditions. This can be very important in an emergency and in helping those who respond to you treat you quickly and correctly.

On your iPhone itself is a built-in app called Health where you can manage your data. In addition to plugging in information useful in an emergency, you can also use the app to track your sleeping habits, vital statistics like temperature and blood pressure, your weight and calories and nutrients consumed. This app can be linked to several others (such as NikeFuel/Nike+), which helps keep better track of your overall fitness.

This article on 9to5mac gives you a rundown of a long list of apps that can be integrated into the Apple Health App. The Health app can also be integrated with other devices such as Jawbone's UP band, which tracks your daily fitness and sleep patterns automatically.

MyFitnessPal

This is one app that I absolutely swear by. Not only does it help you stay in control of your foods for lupus, but it also ensures that you're getting a healthy and balanced diet.

Although there are no foods that cure lupus, St. Thomas Trust, a leading lupus research center in London, states that a balanced diet is extremely important — and MyFitnessPal helps you stick to it.

You can track several things with this free app, not just how many calories you consume. It will help you ensure you are drinking enough fluids and that you are eating the correct amount of essential nutrients.

You can keep track of everything from your intake of calcium to the amount of protein you eat. The app will give you a guideline for your height and weight, telling you how much of the most important nutrients (fat, carbohydrates, protein) you need to keep your body going.

It also helps you keep track of the nutrients you don’t need as much of, like sugar and sodium, and reminds you to stay under a daily limit. You can also track how many calories you eat per day to ensure you stay on track and how much exercise you have gotten in.

To me, this app is totally invaluable in keeping my lupus under control because it holds me accountable for my nutrition choices. While proper nutrition can’t cure your illness, it can keep your body a bit more in balance and help stave off future flares.

You can get MyFitnessPal for Android and Apple devices.

Are there any other apps you would recommend for people with lupus?