

EL PASO HERALD POST

EL PASO, TX
DAILY 22,266

SATURDAY
JUN 7 1997

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Treatment effective against Lupus

CHICAGO — Lupus, an incurable disease that turns victims' immune systems against them, has proved vulnerable to a new radical approach that destroys and then revives the body's natural defenses, doctors said Friday.

A 24-year-old woman dangerously ill with the disease shows no signs of lupus in her system two months after the treatment, said Dr. Richard Burt at Northwestern Memorial Hospital.

Heather Markel, whose condition worsened recently after 13 years of treatment with steroids and chemotherapy, is the first patient to receive the treatment, Burt said.

He and others cautioned that it is still early for a definitive answer because the disease is characterized by active and inactive periods.