

BELLINGHAM HERALD

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New technique counters 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 re-creates 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.

Since the stem cell transplant in April, Markel's failing kidneys have returned to normal, her strength is back and she has sharply lowered the amount of steroids she is taking.]