

## Condition:



# Lupus

## Covered in this fact sheet

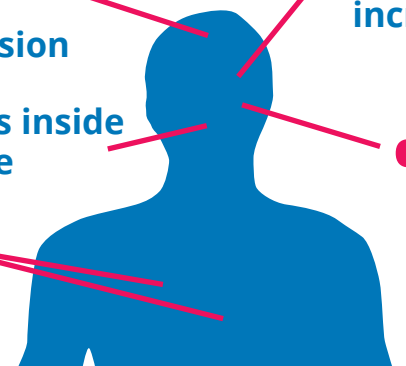
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## What is Lupus?

The full name for Lupus is; Systemic Lupus Erythematosus (SLE). It is a long term condition that causes inflammation to the joints, skin and other organs. Unfortunately there is no cure for Lupus, however, symptoms can improve if treatment starts early.

### Common Lupus Symptoms

(Symptoms of SLE may vary widely between individuals)

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- **Brain: Persistent and unusual headaches, memory loss, or confusion**
  - **Eyes: Dry or puffy eyes, and increasing sensitivity to light**
  - **Mouth and Nose: Sores inside the mouth and/or nose**
  - **Skin: A “butterfly” rash on face usually over the cheeks and bridge of the nose or rashes that can worsen with sun exposure**
  - **Lungs/Heart: Shortness of breath and/or pain in the chest**

## Working with Lupus

Consider:

- **What hours and time of day you feel at your best?** Morning/ Afternoon – could you work around these times?
- **Avoid** a role that has activities which could increase the joint pain that you potentially suffer with.
- **Speak with your employer** and explain your condition to them, this way they will understand any limitations or restrictions regarding the condition.



[Click here](#) for a free booklet on working with Lupus

## How do I know if I have Lupus?

The following symptoms do not always apply to everyone. You do not need to be experiencing all of the below to have Lupus:

### The 3 main symptoms of Lupus are:

1. Joint pain and stiffness
2. Extreme tiredness that will not go away however much you rest
3. Skin rashes – often over the nose and cheeks

### As well as the 3 main symptoms, you may also notice:

- Weight loss
- Swollen glands
- Sensitivity to light
- Poor circulation to fingers and toes

## Causes of Lupus

The exact cause of Lupus is currently unknown. Some experts believe that contributing factors are; genetics, hormones and the environment.

Also things such as; viral infections, strong medications, sunlight, puberty, childbirth and menopause may also trigger the condition.

It is an autoimmune condition which means the body's immune system attacks healthy tissue.

More women than men get Lupus and it is more common in Black and Asian women.

It is not contagious.

## Talking to your GP/health professional

As lupus symptoms can be similar to lots of other conditions, it can take some time to diagnose. Your GP will usually do some blood tests. High levels of a type of antibody, combined with typical symptoms, mean lupus is likely.

You might be referred for X-rays and scans of your heart, kidney and other organs if your doctor thinks they may be affected.

## Treatments for Lupus

Once lupus is diagnosed, you'll be advised to have regular checks and tests – for example, regular blood tests to check anemia and urine tests to check for kidney problems, which lupus can cause.

### Lupus is generally treated using:

- Anti-inflammatory medication such as ibuprofen
- Hydroxychloroquine for fatigue and skin and joint problems
- Steroid tablets, injections and creams for kidney inflammation and rashes

# Self-Management/Care

There are quite a few things that you can do to help yourself if you have Lupus. These are:



## Eat Healthy

Eat a healthy balanced diet.



## Connect

Ask for help from friends, family and professionals when you need it.



## Be Active

When having a flare up, try and stay active by walking or swimming.



## Sleep

Fatigue can be a key trigger, so get lots of rest - Some tips are to remove any phone or screens as blue light is bad for your sleep. Have an aired room and create a relaxed atmosphere to sleep in.



## Take Notice

Try relaxation techniques to manage stress as this can make symptoms worse.



## Protect yourself in the sun

Use factor 50+ sunscreen (you may be able to get this on prescription if you have been diagnosed with Lupus). Wear a hat in the sun.

## Do Not:

- Do not smoke – it is very important to stop smoking if you have Lupus
- Do not sit in direct sunlight
- Do not sit in a room with florescent lights for a long period of time

## Useful links

### Reference



Click here to visit the NHS  
**Website (link opens in new window)**

### Reference



Click here to read an article around causes of Lupus on Medical News Today  
**Website (link opens in new window)**

### Reference



Click here to visit Lupus UK  
**Website (link opens in new window)**