

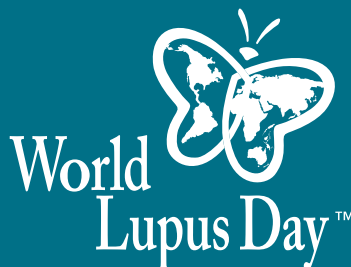
WORLD LUPUS DAY - MAY 10



# COULD YOU HAVE LUPUS?

## A SYMPTOMS CHECKLIST

Lupus is a chronic autoimmune disease that causes inflammation in various parts of the body. Lupus can be hard to diagnose because symptoms vary from person to person, can come and go over a long period of time, and often imitate symptoms of other illnesses. It is important to know the warning signs and symptoms of lupus.



Learn more at [worldlupusday.org](http://worldlupusday.org)

## Complete this simple check-list to help you recognize the symptoms and risk factors for lupus\*.

Check the symptoms you have experienced in terms of your current AND past health status. If you had symptoms like these over time, especially if you have had several, talk to your doctor about lupus.



### Skin

- A reaction to the sun or light that causes a skin rash to appear or to get worse.
- Redness or rash across your nose and cheeks or other unexplained rashes.
- Sudden, unexplained hair loss.



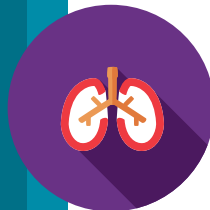
### Muscles and Joints

- Achy, painful and or swollen joints for more than three months.
- Persistent, extremely fatigue and weakness for days or weeks at a time, even after plenty of sleep.



### Brain and Nervous System

- Seizure or unexplained confusion that lasted for more than an hour.
- Unexplained fever higher than 100° F/38° C for more than a few days.



### Heart or Lungs

- Chest pain while taking deep breaths.



### Eyes, Nose, and Mouth

- Sores in your mouth or nose that lasted for more than five days, or sores on your skin that would not heal.



### Blood and Circulatory System

- Told you have anemia, low white cell count, or low platelet count.
- Fingers and/or toes become red or blue, or feel numb or painful.
- Blood clotting problems or a miscarriage.



### Kidneys

- Told you have protein in your urine.
- Swelling in your legs and ankles on both sides at the same time.

*\*This check list is only meant to help you recognize the signs and symptoms of lupus and as a guide for you and your doctor to discuss your possible risk for lupus.*

## FACTS ABOUT LUPUS

Lupus is an autoimmune disease that can affect various parts of the body. Lupus develops mostly in women between ages 15 and 44, but men, older people, and children can also have lupus. Normally our body's immune system produces proteins called antibodies that protect the body from foreign invaders, such as viruses and bacteria. Autoimmune means your immune system cannot tell the difference between these invaders and your body's own cells ("auto" means "self") and creates autoantibodies that attack and damage healthy tissue. These autoantibodies cause inflammation, pain, and damage in various parts of the body.

## CAUSES OF LUPUS

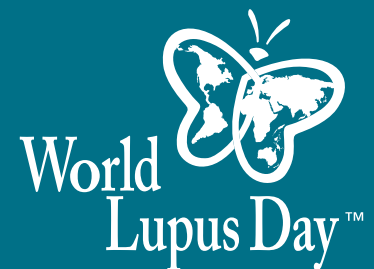
The causes of lupus remain unknown, but scientists believe three factors may play a role: heredity, hormones, and environmental factors. No single gene or group of genes has been proven to cause lupus. Lupus does, however, appear in certain families, and certain genes have been identified as contributing to the development of lupus. Two of the environmental factors are ultraviolet rays from the sun (which can activate inflammatory cells in the skin) and certain medicines. Also, infections and stress might play roles in triggering flares in some people. Lupus is not contagious. You can't 'catch' lupus or give lupus to someone else.

## DIAGNOSING LUPUS

Symptoms of lupus can vary from one person to another. The most common symptoms include joint and muscle pain, overwhelming fatigue, skin rashes, fevers, and hair loss. Some manifestations of lupus are not immediately apparent, and early diagnosis plays an important role in preventing damage to vital organs. If you think you might have lupus, you should see your doctor. There is no one test for lupus, so your doctor will need to take blood for a variety of tests. Your family health history and your own health history are also important parts of a lupus diagnosis.

## LIFE WITH LUPUS

Although there is no cure for lupus, early diagnosis and proper medical treatment can significantly help to control the disease. Because no two people with lupus are alike, the best treatment approach is with a health care team that will tailor treatment to your specific condition. People who are most successful at living with lupus have learned to balance their lives while living with a chronic illness. Maintain a healthy diet, get plenty of rest, avoid stress and exposure to the sun and ultraviolet light, stop smoking and drink only in moderation. Increasing numbers of research projects on lupus are under way, looking for new and improved treatments to manage lupus, and, one day, to find a cure.



Learn more at  
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