



Living With Lupus

Women get lupus about nine times more often than men.

1. Introduction

Lupus is an autoimmune condition that causes inflammation in various body systems, including the joints, skin, kidneys, brain, heart and lungs. Diagnosing lupus can be difficult because its symptoms can overlap with other conditions. A distinctive characteristic of lupus is a butterfly-shaped rash on both cheeks, but not everyone with lupus will have this symptom.

2. Symptoms

The lupus symptoms people experience will differ based on which body systems the condition affects. The most common symptoms include:

- + Fever and fatigue
- + Arthritis, causing painful and swollen joints and morning stiffness
- + Butterfly-shaped rash on the face that covers the cheeks and bridge of the nose
- + Shortness of breath or chest pain
- + Headaches, dizziness, depression, confusion or seizures
- + Swelling in the legs or around the eyes

3. Diagnosis

There is no singular test that can diagnose lupus. However, physicians will use a combination of tests to lead to a diagnosis.

- + **Blood tests** provide physicians with valuable insight into the immune system and can indicate the presence of inflammation within the body.
- + **Urine tests** can help determine if there are problems with the patient's kidneys.
- + **Biopsies** of tissue are done to detect any signs of inflammation and damage.

4. Treatments

The appropriate treatment for lupus will be based on the specific signs and symptoms an individual experiences. As symptoms fluctuate, a physician may determine that the medications or dosages may need to be adjusted. The medications that are most frequently prescribed to manage lupus include:

- + Nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs)
- + Antimalarial drugs
- + Corticosteroids
- + Immunosuppressants
- + Biologics

Did you know?

People who have a family member with lupus or another autoimmune disease are more likely to develop lupus.

For more information on lupus and supportive resources, please visit [mayoclinic.org](https://www.mayoclinic.org).

References:

<https://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/lupus/symptoms-causes/syc-20365789>

<https://www.lupus.org/resources/diagnosing-lupus-guide>

<https://www.niams.nih.gov/health-topics/lupus>