



What is Lupus?

Your body's immune system helps fight disease and infection, germs and viruses. But when someone has lupus, their immune system starts to attack their own body, rather than just fighting germs. As a result, someone with lupus can get easily tired, have swelling and skin rashes, or in more serious cases, have their brain or kidney affected.

What are the symptoms?

Extreme tiredness, sensitivity to the sun, swelling of joints, butterfly-shaped rashes on the skin, and sudden fevers are just some symptoms of lupus. But because lupus symptoms can be the same as those of many other diseases, it is important to be diagnosed by a doctor.

How is lupus diagnosed?

In total, there are 11 criteria for diagnosing lupus, some, like blood tests, can be tested for (clinical) and others, like the butterfly-shaped skin rashes, can be observed. A patient has to be positive on 4 of these 11 for them to be diagnosed with lupus.

Who gets lupus?

9 out of 10 lupus patients are women and girls, and people of color get lupus more often than others. There are about 1.5-2 million lupus patients in the US, and 5 million worldwide. Lupus is usually caught in people 15-45, but it can be diagnosed at any age.

How does someone get lupus?

No one knows yet. What we do know is that lupus is not transmissible, meaning you cannot get it from another person. Most scientists believe that lupus is caused by a mix of genetic and environmental factors.

Who treats lupus?

A whole team of doctors can care for a patient with lupus, depending on the form of lupus someone has. Most commonly, patients see a rheumatologist. A rheumatologist is a doctor who has special training in bone and muscle-related diseases. But patients may also see a nephrologist for their kidneys, a neurologist for their brains, and others.

How is lupus treated?

There is no cure for lupus. But most patients can manage their disease with medication, diet adjustment and lifestyle changes. Some of the medications used to treat lupus are: benlysta, prednisone, and plaquenil. Lupus patients are also advised to eat a healthy diet with plenty of fruits and vegetables, to avoid direct sunlight as much as possible and use sunscreen, and when they can, and to be moderately active when possible.

It is very important to understand that each patient can have not just different responses to lupus, but also to different treatments. That's why it is very important for every patient to have their own plan of treatment created with their doctors and others who care for them.

Where can I find more information?

If you know someone who has lupus, you can ask them! You can also ask a doctor. Here are some places on the web you can find more information:

- LFNC.org
- Lupusresearch.org
- CDC.gov/lupus
- MayoClinic.org

We can help!

The Lupus Foundation of Northern California was founded in 1978 to serve people with lupus in the region. The LFNC has support groups, classes for patients, conferences, and many other programs for lupus patients and their loved ones. We can be reached at:

Lupus Foundation of Northern California

2635 N First St Ste 211
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LFNC.org

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