

What you need to know *about* **LUPUS**

Lupus is a chronic disease of the immune system.

Lupus is a chronic and complex autoimmune disease that may cause widespread inflammation and tissue damage, especially in the brain, lungs, heart, and kidneys.

The cause of lupus is unknown, but genetics, environment and hormones are believed to play a role. Lupus is not contagious.

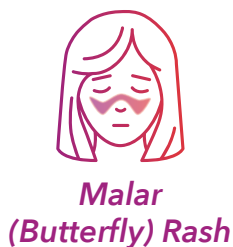
Lupus can be misdiagnosed.

Other conditions that may look like lupus include infections, cancers, or inflammatory diseases.

There is no single test to diagnose lupus. Diagnosis is confirmed by a combination of physical exams, lab tests, and medical history.

Symptoms of lupus vary.

Symptoms vary, but the most common symptoms of lupus include:



Symptoms may:

- Be mild, moderate or severe
- Persist or resolve
- Come on suddenly or over time

Anyone can get lupus

However, some are at greater risk:



Women between ages 15-44



Black/African American, Hispanic/Latino, Asian, or Native American individuals



Family history of lupus or autoimmune disease

Two most common complications of lupus:

1

Neuropsychiatric SLE (NPSLE)

Describes feelings of depression, headaches, and lupus fog

2

Lupus Nephritis (LN)

When the kidneys become affected by lupus, it is called lupus nephritis

Who treats Lupus?

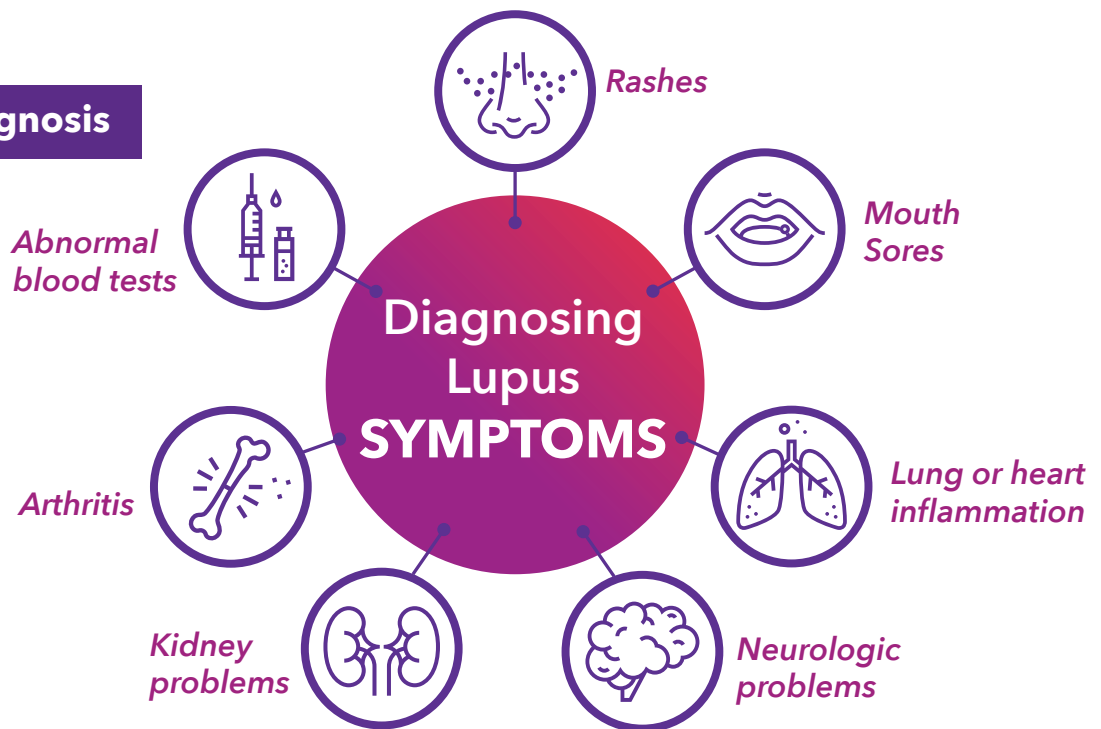
Lupus is generally treated by a team of physicians led by a rheumatologist. A rheumatologist specializes in arthritis and other inflammatory diseases.



Criteria for lupus diagnosis

No two cases of lupus are the same, which makes lupus difficult to diagnose.

However, the American College of Rheumatology has a list of symptoms and other measures that doctors use as a guide to determine if a person has lupus.



If you think you have lupus...

- Write down your symptoms and talk to your health care provider
- Ask your doctor to refer you to a rheumatologist
- To learn more, go to the Lupus Research Alliance website: lupusresearch.org

This fact sheet is part of an education program. If you are interested in learning more about how you can spread lupus awareness, contact advocacy@lupusresearch.org and ask about the *What you need to know about Lupus Toolkit*.

