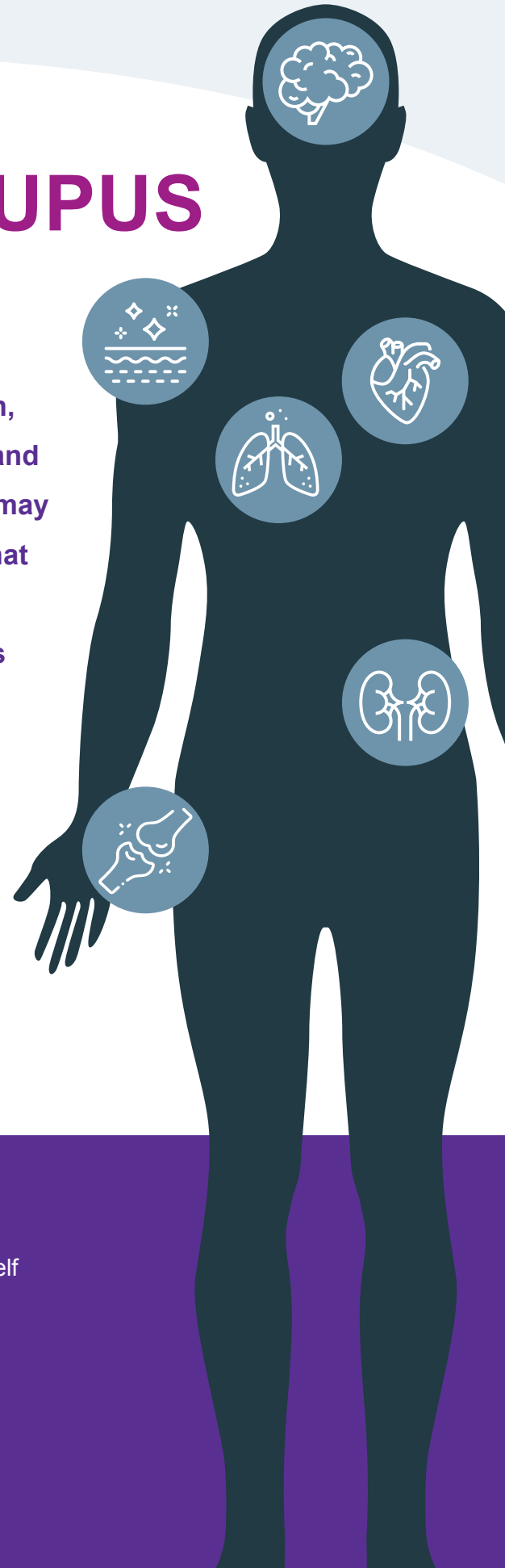


THE IMPACT OF LUPUS ON THE BODY

Lupus can impact almost any part of the body. Often, lupus affects the kidneys, brain, heart, lungs, skin, and joints. Also, lupus affects everyone differently. You may have lupus with very different symptoms. This is what makes lupus unique. Lupus is systemic, meaning it affects the whole body, so it is unlike other diseases that may only affect one area of the body.

Since lupus is unique, it may take time for you and your provider to find the best treatment for your symptoms. But treating lupus is so important. Treatments can help you manage your current symptoms and prevent future flares or damage. They can also prevent other health problems caused by lupus. Unfortunately, there is no cure for lupus. However, treatments can help you lead healthy lives and prevent more serious outcomes.



What body parts does lupus affect?

Lupus can affect almost any part of the body because of lupus itself or through a comorbidity. Lupus can impact your:

- Joints
- Skin
- Kidneys
- Brain & Nervous System
- Heart
- Lungs

What is a comorbidity?

A comorbidity is a disease or condition that happens at the same time as another condition you have or is caused by it.

For example, high blood pressure (hypertension) is a comorbidity caused by lupus. If you have lupus, you may later develop high blood pressure.

LUPUS → **HIGH BLOOD PRESSURE**

Some comorbidities are not caused by each other but happen at the same time.

For example, people with lupus often also have fibromyalgia. But lupus does not cause fibromyalgia.



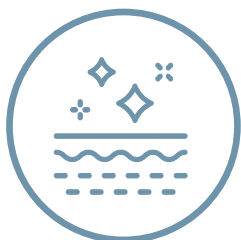
Lupus and the body systems

Here are some of the ways lupus affects parts of the body. If you notice any of these symptoms, talk with your provider. Some of these symptoms are common with other diseases, so talk with your provider about the possibility of lupus.



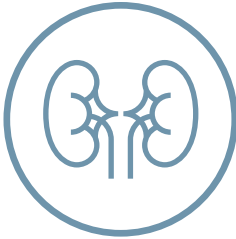
JOINTS

- Joint pain
- Lupus arthritis — stiffness upon waking up, which gets better throughout the day
- Jaccoud's arthritis — the misalignment of joints that leads to the deformation of the hands
- Osteoporosis — weakening of the bones which may feel like severe back pain, loss of height, or stooped posture



SKIN AND HAIR

- Discolored and/or scaly rashes on sun-exposed areas. Discoloration may appear pink, red, brown, or even purplish depending on the skin type.
- Redness or sores on mouth or nose
- Sensitivity to sunlight or artificial light (called photosensitivity)
- Thinning of hair or a rash associated with hair loss



KIDNEYS

- Lupus nephritis — when the kidneys cannot get rid of waste and other toxins from the body as they should. Systemic Lupus Erythematosus (SLE) causes this type of kidney disease, which can lead to kidney failure
 - Kidney damage — when the kidneys cannot filter blood the way they should
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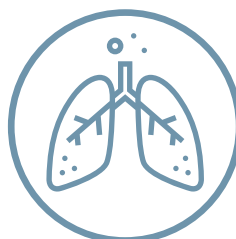
BRAIN AND NERVOUS SYSTEM

- Neurological function — headaches, dizziness, depression, memory disturbances, vision problems, seizures, stroke, or changes in behavior
 - Lupus fog — feelings of confusion, fatigue, memory loss, and difficulty expressing thought
 - Peripheral neuropathies — when inflammation damages nerve cells in the peripheral nervous system. Symptoms include pain, numbness, tingling, weakness, a burning sensation, vision problems, or carpal tunnel syndrome
 - Transverse myelitis — pain that can begin suddenly in the lower back and shoot down the legs and arms, or around the chest or abdomen
-



HEART

- Heart disease (also called cardiovascular disease)
 - Myocarditis — inflammation in the heart causing chest pain, shortness of breath, and irregular heartbeats
 - Pericarditis — inflammation in the membrane surrounding the heart causing sharp chest pain
 - Coronary artery disease (CAD) — when the arteries that supply blood to the heart become hard and narrow. Symptoms include chest pain, shortness of breath, and nausea
-



LUNGS

- Pleuritis — inflammation of the chest cavity lining. Pleuritis can cause chest pain and difficulty breathing
- Pneumonitis — inflammation of the lungs due to lupus and not an infection. Symptoms of pneumonitis include chest pain, shortness of breath, and a dry cough
- Pulmonary emboli (blood clots) — blood clots that block arteries leading into the lungs and can decrease oxygen flow to the lungs



BLOOD AND BLOOD VESSELS

- Tissue and organ inflammation
- Vasculitis — inflammation in the blood vessels
- Antiphospholipid antibody syndrome (APS) — when blood vessels become narrow and irregular, increasing the risk of blood clots



EYES

- Dry eyes
- Changes in the skin around the eyelids
- Inflammation of the white outer layer of the eyeball
- Changes to the blood vessels in the retina
- Damage to the nerves in the muscle that control eye movement and vision

Treatment

Lupus can affect various body parts. Make sure you are treating your lupus appropriately. Not treating or undertreating lupus can make you feel worse and may lead to organ damage. You and your provider can create a treatment plan to reduce inflammation. You can also manage flares. And you can prevent or slow down the impact on other organs.

WHAT WILL BE THE BEST TREATMENT PLAN FOR YOU?

It depends on how many treatments you and your provider find work for you and your symptoms. Your provider may prescribe a treatment to relieve pain and another to calm the immune system. If you have other conditions or comorbidities, you may need other treatments too.

STAY ORGANIZED

Write down the names of your treatments and/or medications and their use.

Treatments/Medications	What it is for/What it does	Notes

PROVIDERS YOU MAY GO TO FOR CARE

You may already have a rheumatologist to manage and treat your lupus. But you may need to see other specialists for some symptoms you have. Here are some specialists that you may see:

- **Cardiologist** — a provider specializing in diseases of the heart.
- **Dermatologist** — a provider specializing in diseases of the skin.
- **Rheumatologist** — a provider specializing in diagnosing and treating problems of the immune system, joints, and bones.
- **Nephrologist** — a provider specializing in diseases of the kidney.
- **Neurologist** — a provider specializing in diseases of the brain and nervous system.
- **Physical Therapist** — a trained professional who helps patients learn ways to lessen their pain and improve motion strength.
- **Pulmonologist** — a provider who specializes in diseases of the lungs.
- **Radiologist** — a provider who looks at and studies X-rays and other images to diagnose health problems.

STAY ORGANIZED

Write down the names of your providers and their specialties

Provider's Name	Specialty	Notes



Summary

- Lupus can affect almost any part of the body.
- It may take time to find a treatment(s) that manages your symptoms.
- It may take a team of providers to treat your lupus.
- Treatment is important in managing symptoms, preventing future flares, poor outcomes, and other health conditions caused by lupus.
- With treatment and proactive care, you can live a healthy life with lupus.