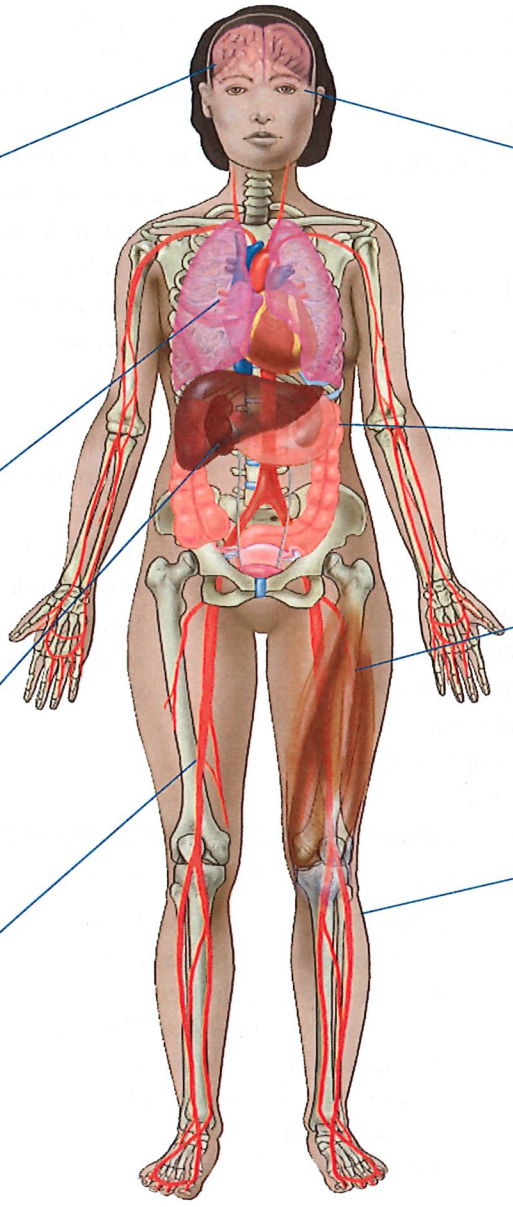
Could You Have Lupus?

Lupus is a chronic autoimmune disease that causes inflammation in various parts of the body. The disease can range from mild to life-threatening. Ninety percent of those diagnosed with lupus are females between ages 15 and 44, but lupus also occurs in men, older people, and children. Lupus can be very hard to diagnose because symptoms vary from person to person, can come and go, and can mimic symptoms of other illnesses. **It is important to know the symptoms of lupus and to know if you are at risk for this disease. Here is a simple test to help you. Read each question and answer it in terms of your current AND past health.**



Brain and Nervous System

Have you had a seizure or convulsion?

Have you had unexplained confusion that lasted more than an hour?

Have you had unexplained fever higher than 100º F/38º C for more than a few days that was not due to infection?

Heart and Lungs

Have you felt chest pain while taking deep breaths?

Have you had a stroke or heart attack?

Kidneys

Have you been told you have protein in your urine?

Have you had swelling in your legs and ankles on both sides at the same time?

Blood and Circulatory System

Have you been told you have anemia, low white cell count, or low platelet count?

Have your fingers and/or toes become pale or red or blue, or felt numb or painful?

Have you had blood clotting problems or a miscarriage?

Eyes, Nose, and Mouth

Have you had sores in your mouth or nose that lasted more than five days?

Have you developed irritation or dryness in your eyes or mouth for more than a few weeks?

Stomach and Intestines

Have you had unexplained weight loss or abdominal pain or tenderness when your belly is touched?

Muscles and Joints

Have you had stiff, tender, and swollen joints that feel worse in the morning?

Have you had extreme fatigue and weakness for days or weeks at a time, even after plenty of sleep?

Skin

Has your skin broken out after being in the sun, but it's not a sunburn?

Have you had redness or rash across your nose and cheeks in the shape of a butterfly?

Have you had sores on your skin that would not heal?

Have you had sudden, unexplained hair loss?

If you have had any symptoms like these, especially if you have had several, talk to your doctor about lupus. Early diagnosis and proper medical care are the best ways to manage lupus.

Please turn over this page for more information.

Help Us Solve
The Cruel Mystery

LUPUS™

FOUNDATION OF AMERICA
GREATER OHIO CHAPTER

Understanding Lupus

What is Lupus?

Lupus is a chronic (long-term) disease that can cause inflammation (swelling) and pain in any part of your body. It's an autoimmune disease, meaning that your immune system attacks healthy tissue (tissue is what our organs are made of). Lupus most commonly affects the skin, joints, and internal organs — like your kidneys or lungs.

Who is at risk for developing lupus?

In the United States, at least 1.5 million people have lupus — and about 16,000 new cases of lupus are reported each year. People of all ages, genders, and racial or ethnic groups can develop lupus. But certain people are at higher risk than others, including:

- Women ages 15 to 44
- Certain racial or ethnic groups — including people who are African American, Asian American, Hispanic/Latino, Native American, or Pacific Islander
- People who have a family member with lupus or another autoimmune disease

What kinds of doctors treat lupus?

Most people who have lupus will see a rheumatologist. Rheumatologists are specialists who diagnose and treat diseases in the joints or muscles. But because lupus can cause problems anywhere in the body, you may have other types of doctors on your treatment team — for example, dermatologist (for your skin), nephrologist (for your kidneys), cardiologist (for your heart).

How is lupus diagnosed?

Diagnosing lupus can be challenging. There isn't just 1 test that can give doctors a "yes" or "no" answer. Sometimes, it can take months — or even years — before your doctor has all the information needed to make a lupus diagnosis. If your doctor thinks you could have lupus, they'll ask you to answer questions about your symptoms, your medical history, and your family medical history. You may also get different kinds of tests. Making a lupus diagnosis is kind of like putting together a puzzle — each answer or test result is like a puzzle piece. When enough of the pieces fit together, your doctor may diagnose you with lupus.

What medicines can treat lupus?

Because lupus can cause a lot of different symptoms, there are many different kinds of medicines that can treat it. A doctor will need to prescribe some of them — others are available over the counter.

The most common medicines used to treat lupus include:

- Anti-inflammatories to help with inflammation and pain
- Antimalarials to protect skin from rashes and UV light
- Biologics to help your immune system work correctly
- Anticoagulants to help prevent blood clots
- Immunosuppressives to help keep your immune system from attacking your body
- Steroids to help with inflammation

National Programs Available:

- National Resource Center on Lupus
- Take Charge Email Series
- The Expert Series
- Lupus & You
- Research Accelerated by You (RAY)
- Support Groups
- Health Educators
- Lupus Connect

Greater Ohio Chapter Programs Available:

- Let's Talk About It Webinar Series
- Living with Lupus Magazine
- Lupus Night Light Blog
- My Lupus Living Room Podcast
- Patient Navigator Program
- Educational Summits & Classes
- Support Groups
- Local State Advocacy

Use this QR code to access program & educational resources.

Although there is no cure for lupus, early diagnosis and proper medical treatment can significantly help to manage the disease. Increasing numbers of research studies are underway, to develop new and improved treatments for lupus, and to find a cure.

The Lupus Foundation of America is the only national force devoted to solving the mystery of lupus, one of the world's cruelest, most unpredictable, and devastating diseases, while giving caring support to those who suffer from its brutal impact. Through a comprehensive program of research, education, and advocacy, we lead the fight to improve the quality of life for all people affected by lupus. Contact the LFA or a chapter that serves your area to find out how you can become involved in our mission and how we can help you.

Revised 12/2021

Lupus Foundation of America Greater Ohio Chapter

12930 Chippewa Rd, Brecksville, OH 44141 | 1 (888) NO-LUPUS (440) 717-0183 | LupusGreaterOhio.org | © 2013

These materials have been made possible through a partnership with AstraZeneca.