Living with Lupus

There are many ways to manage and treat lupus that help keep symptoms from interfering with daily life.

Lupus treatment goals

- Manage symptoms
  - Lupus symptoms like muscle pain, fever, rashes, fatigue, hair loss and eye problems can interfere with daily life.

- Reduce inflammation
  - The inflammation caused by lupus can affect many parts of the body, including your joints, skin, kidneys, blood cells, brain, heart and lungs.

- Prevent flares
  - Flares can be mild, or they can be serious enough to disrupt — or even threaten — your life.

- Minimize organ damage
  - Lupus can cause major, irreversible damage to the kidneys, lungs and other organs.

Finding the right treatment

Lupus is a complicated illness that affects everyone differently. Some researchers for scientists to keep learning about and developing treatments for lupus.

It’s also important for you to advocate for yourself. Talk to your healthcare provider about developing an individualized treatment plan to help you live your best life.

Types of lupus treatment

- Non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs) — used to reduce inflammation, pain and fever
- Steroids — work quickly to lessen pain and inflammation by curbing overactive white blood cells
- Antimalarials (drugs used to treat malaria) — control symptoms and flares by reducing proteins in the blood that attack healthy cells
- B-lymphocyte stimulator (BLyS) protein inhibitor — a type of drug known as a biologic that may reduce the number of abnormal B cells thought to be a problem for people with lupus
- Immunosuppressives (including some chemotherapy drugs) — help stop your immune system from attacking your body’s healthy tissue
- Lifestyle changes — staying out of the sun and lowering stress can help keep your symptoms under control

Complications related to lupus may need their own treatments, such as:
- Antibiotics for infections
- Statins for high cholesterol
- Anticonvulsants for seizures
- Vitamin D for kidney problems

Managing lupus

Some lifestyle changes can help keep your lupus under better control.

- Protect yourself from the sun
- Lower your stress
- Get good sleep
- Perform low-impact physical activity
- Don’t smoke

This educational resource was created with support from Novartis, a 2023 HealthyWomen Corporate Advisory Council member.