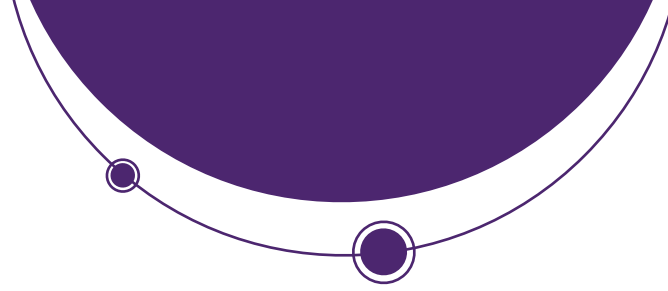




DID YOU KNOW?

Advances in the understanding and treatment of lupus have helped people live longer and healthier lives. There are a limited number of treatments available. More research is needed to develop new therapies.



FDA encourages diverse participation in clinical trials.

If you think a clinical trial may be right for you, talk to your health care provider.

You can also search for clinical trials in your area at www.clinicaltrials.gov.

FOR MORE INFORMATION



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LUPUS WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW



FDA Office of Minority
Health and Health Equity



What is lupus?

Lupus is a chronic (long-term) autoimmune disease that can damage many parts of the body, including the skin, joints, heart, lung, kidneys, blood cells, and brain. Autoimmune diseases happen when the body's immune system can't tell the difference between its own cells and germs like bacteria and viruses, causing the body to mistakenly attack its healthy cells. These attacks can cause inflammation, pain, and in some cases permanent tissue damage, which can be widespread.

About 9 out of 10 people diagnosed with lupus are women aged 15 to 44, but the condition affects men as well.



What are the symptoms of lupus?

Symptoms can range from muscle and joint pain to rashes, chest pain, extreme fatigue, blood clotting, kidney problems, hair loss, light sensitivity, mouth sores, anemia, and eye disease. Over time, new symptoms can develop while others fade. People living with lupus can experience flares, which is when symptoms get worse; and remissions, which is when symptoms disappear.

In addition, symptoms may differ from person to person. Many people live with the disease for years before being diagnosed.



How is lupus diagnosed?

Lupus can be hard to diagnose because it has many symptoms that are often mistaken for symptoms of other diseases. Doctors use a combination of methods to diagnose lupus, including:

- Taking a medical history
- Identifying a family history of lupus or other autoimmune diseases
- Completing a physical exam
- Conducting blood and urine tests
- Conducting skin or kidney biopsies

How is lupus treated?

Just as lupus can be difficult to diagnose, it can also be difficult to treat. Treatment depends on which part of the body the disease affects and the severity. Lupus treatments may:

- Prevent flares
- Treat symptoms when they happen
- Reduce organ damage and other problems

There is no cure for lupus, but medical treatments and lifestyle changes can help keep symptoms under control.

Belimumab is the only FDA-approved treatment for lupus. It is a type of BLYS-specific inhibitor, which is a medication that limits the amount of abnormal B cells (cells in the immune system that create antibodies) found in people with lupus.

Your health care provider will work with you to identify other treatment options to manage your lupus symptoms. These treatments include:

- **Nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs):** NSAIDs may help reduce mild pain and swelling in joints and muscles
- **Corticosteroids:** may help reduce swelling, tenderness, and pain
- **Antimalarials:** prevent or treat malaria and also treat joint pain, skin rashes, fatigue, and lung inflammation
- **Immunosuppressive drugs/chemotherapy:** may be used in severe cases, when lupus affects major organs and other treatments do not work

