

JUST DIAGNOSED: LUPUS

Lupus is an autoimmune disease that can impact the joints, skin, blood vessels, and even internal organs. Lupus patients may experience a rash, fatigue, swollen or painful joints, or fevers. It is important to note there are different types of lupus including discoid, drug induced, neonatal and systemic lupus erythematosus (SLE).



SELF-MANAGEMENT OF LUPUS

Physical therapy and stress relief methods including massage and relaxation techniques, as well as acupuncture are often helpful.

Causes and risk factors: unknown, but several factors are believed to have an impact. These include: genetics, environment, illness, hormones, and medications.

DIAGNOSIS: a clinical diagnosis is made using history, examination, blood tests such as anti-nuclear antibody (ANA) and other blood tests, skin biopsies, and a number of other criteria.

Treatment: Depends upon disease symptoms (each case is different) and disease severity. Your care should be managed by a rheumatologist- a doctor who specializes in rheumatological diseases.

Medications: You may be prescribed one or more of the following medication classes:

Cortisone: Prednisone or similar medication: Reduce inflammation.

Nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory Drugs (NSAIDS): Reduces inflammation and pain.

Disease modifying anti-rheumatic drugs (DMARDS): Reduce disease activity.

Biologic agents: Reduce disease activity, newest class of medication.

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EXERCISE

Regular exercise is beneficial for lupus. At first exercise may make your symptoms worse so build up gradually. Walking, bicycling, swimming, stretching and water exercise may all be used. See your doctor before starting exercise.

TAKING CARE OF YOURSELF

Diet: Many people wonder if there is a diet they can follow to improve their lupus. Following a healthy diet is recommended.

Education: learning everything you can about lupus from reliable sources is empowering and makes you an active well informed part of your health care team.

Manage your activity: you don't have to get everything done all in one day, break up activities into manageable parts. Include enjoyable activities in your routine.

Seek Support: Studies show people with adequate levels of support do much better in following their medical regimen. Black Hills Arthritis Association has a monthly support group! We meet the second Saturday of each month from 9-11 AM at Rapid City Regional Hospital in the Sylvan room. We also have an ongoing email support group. If interested just email info@blackhillsarthritis.com.



Helpful websites:

www.lupus.org Lupus Foundation of America

www.rheumatology.org (look for patient resources)

www.blackhillsarthritis.org

