



Education



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Frequently Asked Questions About Lupus

1. What is lupus?

- What does autoimmune mean?
- What is inflammation?
- What happens in autoimmune diseases like lupus?
- Where did the name come from?
- Who gets lupus?
- What are the symptoms of lupus?

2. Different kinds of lupus

3. Can you catch lupus?

4. Is lupus a fatal disease?

- Death in lupus, what is it due to?

5. Cancer

- Is lupus a form of cancer?
- Are people with lupus more likely to develop cancer?
- Cancer treatment in lupus, any special considerations?

6. AIDS and lupus, are they alike?

7. Lupus anticoagulant

- Does the lupus anticoagulant mean I have lupus?
- Can you have antiphospholipid antibodies and not lupus?
- Can you have antiphospholipid antibodies and not have related symptoms?

8. MS and lupus

- MRI findings in CNS lupus

9. Childhood lupus, prognosis

LUPUS OF THE SKIN

10. Symptoms of cutaneous lupus (lupus of the skin, "discoid")

- Different types of rashes
- Diagnosis
- Specialist in lupus of the skin treatment

11. Cutaneous (skin) vs systemic lupus

12. Hair loss

13. Make-up

14. Hives and burning sensation

15. Photosensitivity

DRUG-INDUCED LUPUS

16. Drug-induced lupus

CAUSE

17. What causes lupus?

Resources:

To receive the most recent information on breast implants contact the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) Breast Implant Information Line 1-800-532-4440 or visit their web site at: <http://www.fda.gov/cdrh/breastimplants/>

The final report made by the Institute of Medicine is available online at: <http://www.nap.edu/books/0309065321/html/>

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22. Is there any truth to the claims being circulated on the Internet that lupus is caused by the artificial sweetener, aspartame?

We are aware there is an email message circulating on the Internet warning individuals with lupus about dangers associated with using the artificial sweetener aspartame. The Lupus Foundation of America consulted with the chair of the LFA Medical Council, Evelyn Hess, MD, MACP, MACR. Dr. Hess is one of the nation's leading researchers in the field of lupus specializing in environmental influences. According to Dr. Hess, there is, as of now, no specific proof of an association with aspartame as a cause or worsening of SLE.

People with lupus should always consult with their physician before making any changes in their medical treatment, diet, exercise or other routine based on information received via the Internet or other sources lacking known credentials.

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DIAGNOSIS

23. Is there a test for systemic lupus?

There is not a single diagnostic test for systemic lupus. Reference: see brochure, [Laboratory Tests Used in the Diagnosis of Lupus](#)

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24. Why is systemic lupus so difficult to diagnose?

It is difficult for a number of reasons:

- Systemic lupus is a multi-system disease, and before a multi-system disease can be diagnosed, there have to be symptoms in many parts of the body and lab work that supports the presence of a multi-system disease.
- Systemic lupus is also difficult to diagnose because it is a disease that does not typically develop rapidly, but rather develops slowly and evolves over time. Symptoms come and go and it generally takes time to gradually accumulate enough symptoms to indicate that a multi-system disease is present. The
- Systemic lupus is known as a Great Imitator because it mimics so many other diseases and conditions.
- Systemic lupus is difficult to diagnose because there is no single diagnostic test for lupus. In fact, many people may have positive lupus tests-particularly the anti-nuclear antibody test-and yet NOT have the disease.