

# *Lupus*

know the signs

## TAKE ACTION



This checklist has been designed to assist you in giving your doctor or healthcare professional a comprehensive description of your experiences. When discussed with your provider, this information will help give a better picture of your symptoms for diagnosis and treatment. Please complete this **lupus symptom checklist** and take it with you to your next appointment.

Lupus Symptom Checklist					
Symptom	✓	Where?	When did you first notice?	How often?	Recent dates?
Example: Red rash	✓	face and chest	2 years ago	Once or twice a month	9/17, 10/8, 10/23, 11/15
Extreme fatigue					
Painful or swollen joints					
Muscle pain or weakness					
Unexplained fever					
Chest pain with deep breathing					
Depression, seizures, or headaches					
Unusual hair loss					
Pale or purple fingers or toes					
Red rash or color change					
Sensitivity to sun					
Other:					

### Now that you KNOW THE SIGNS of lupus, TAKE ACTION

It's important for you to know that lupus is a manageable disease. With proper diagnosis and treatment, the disease is now more manageable than in years past. People with lupus have the chance to live full and productive lives. If you suspect you may have or be at risk for lupus, see your doctor. That's the only way to help manage it. See the following important tips on talking to your doctor.



### **Talking to your healthcare professional**

Diagnosing lupus can be difficult. It can take time for doctors and other healthcare professionals to piece together the symptoms to diagnose this complex disease. Making a correct diagnosis of lupus requires good communication between you and your healthcare professional.

### **How a diagnosis is made**

If you are experiencing common signs and symptoms of lupus, it is important that you **TAKE ACTION**. Only a medical professional can make a diagnosis of lupus.

- First, telling a health professional about your symptoms and other problems you have had can help him or her understand what you are experiencing. Your history can provide clues to your disease, for example if anyone in your family has had lupus. Share the lupus checklist you have completed with your health professional.
- You will be examined for rashes and other signs that something is wrong.
- Laboratory tests of blood and urine, for example, may be taken to see how your immune system is working.<sup>1</sup>

### **What to ask your healthcare professional**

Don't be afraid to ask questions, no matter how sensitive. Here are some questions you may consider asking:

#### **Diagnosis and treatment**

- Could my condition be related to anything else, like medications or allergies?
- Is there a way for us to know how serious my lupus will get?
- Are there additional medical or healthcare specialists I should see?

#### **Other treatments/activities**

- Besides the medicines you prescribe for me, should I take vitamins or supplements?
- Are there any additional activities, like exercise or yoga I should take part in that may help my condition?
- Is it okay to receive vaccinations?

#### **Lifestyle considerations**

- How do I tell my family about my condition?
- Will I need to quit my job?
- Should I restrict my travel?
- I've heard that pharmaceutical companies run clinical trials for new drugs. Is that a good option for me?
- What if I want to have a baby?

#### **Reference:**

1. National Institute of Arthritis and Musculoskeletal and Skin Diseases Website. The many shades of lupus: information for multicultural communities. [http://www.niams.nih.gov/health\\_info/lupus/shades\\_of\\_lupus.asp](http://www.niams.nih.gov/health_info/lupus/shades_of_lupus.asp). Accessed July 14, 2010.

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