

# Signs and Symptoms of Lupus

Systemic lupus erythematosus (SLE) is a chronic, multisystem autoimmune disease with a broad spectrum of symptoms and potential end-organ damage. The course of disease varies from patient to patient. Assessment of disease activity, symptoms, and severity is important for the establishment of an appropriate diagnosis and treatment program for individual patients.<sup>1,2</sup>

## Symptoms of SLE May Include:

- Fatigue
- Skin rashes
- Hair loss
- Fever (in the absence of infection)
- Joint pain and swelling
- Oral ulcers
- Photosensitivity
- Chest pain upon breathing
- Pale or purple fingers or toes with cold exposure

## Clinical Features and Sites of End-Organ Damage<sup>1,2</sup>

ORGAN SYSTEM	CLINICAL FEATURES
Blood	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Hemolytic anemia</li><li>• Leukopenia</li><li>• Autoantibodies</li><li>• Thrombosis</li><li>• Thrombocytopenia</li><li>• Immune complexes</li></ul>
Central Nervous System	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Seizures</li><li>• Psychosis</li><li>• Neuropathies</li><li>• Cognitive dysfunction</li><li>• Depression</li><li>• Low-grade fever</li><li>• Anxiety</li><li>• Insomnia</li></ul>
Gastro-intestinal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Nausea</li><li>• Vomiting</li><li>• Abdominal pain</li><li>• Weight changes</li></ul>

(continued)

## Clinical Features and Sites of End-Organ Damage<sup>1,2</sup> (cont.)

ORGAN SYSTEM	CLINICAL FEATURES
Heart & Lungs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Pleuritis</li><li>• Pneumonitis</li><li>• Pericarditis</li><li>• Myocarditis</li><li>• Endocarditis</li></ul>
Kidneys	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Edema</li><li>• Hematuria</li><li>• Proteinuria</li><li>• Cell casts</li><li>• Renal impairment</li></ul>
Mucous Membranes & Eyes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Ulcers in the mouth, nose, or vagina</li><li>• Dry eyes</li></ul>
Musculo-skeletal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Arthritis</li><li>• Myositis</li><li>• Arthralgia</li></ul>
Reproductive System	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Pregnancy complications</li><li>• Miscarriage</li></ul>
Skin	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Skin rash</li><li>• Vasculitis</li><li>• Alopecia</li><li>• Raynaud's phenomenon</li><li>• Photo-sensitivity</li></ul>

**References:** **1.** ACR Ad Hoc Committee on Systemic Lupus Erythematosus Guidelines. Guidelines for referral and management of systemic lupus erythematosus in adults. *Arthritis Rheum.* 1999;42:1785-1796. **2.** U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. *Lupus: A Patient Care Guide for Nurses and Other Health Professionals.* 3rd ed. September 2006. NIH publication 06-4262.



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