As you have found out by now, Lupus is an autoimmune disease. This means that the immune system mistakes the body's own tissues as foreign invaders and attacks them. Some people with lupus suffer only minor inconvenience, while others suffer lifelong chronic disabilities.

1. Lupus affects people of different ethnicity.

2. Nine out of 10 people with lupus are women.

There Are Several Types Of Lupus:

- **Cutaneous Lupus**
- **Systemic Lupus**
- **Drug Induced Lupus**
- **Neonatal Lupus**
- **Childhood Lupus**

**Systemic Lupus** - Systemic lupus erythematosus is the most common type. It is often diagnosed, or referred to as "lupus." This type can affect almost any part of the body. External, or internal meaning the organs. A large number of people diagnosed with systemic lupus are women. Among people in the United States, the highest numbers are found in African-Americans. [Inclusive Links On Lupus]

**Cutaneous Lupus** - This was the first type of lupus to ever be diagnosed. This type of Lupus affects primarily the skin only. Some of the effects are, thick red scaly rashes on the face. The neck, and scalp area. This particular type can cause scarring, after the rash goes away. Hair loss is also a problem in the scalp area.

**Drug Induced Lupus** - A very rare condition that occurs as a result of taking certain types of medications for long periods of time. The drugs relative to this form of lupus are Hydralazine (*Apresoline*), and Procainamide (*Pronestryl*). This particular drug is used to treat high blood pressure. Procainamide (*Pronestryl*) is used to treat heart disease. As these drugs can cause drug-induced lupus they are being used less, and less. The symptoms that occur can mimic those of Systemic Lupus. They are muscle pain, joint pain, fever, and rash. Men are more susceptible to develop this form of lupus than women. After you stop using these drugs, the symptoms will go away. It usually takes six months for the effects to ware off. This form of treatment does not cause patients to develop Systemic Lupus.
Symptoms Of Lupus Can Be Mild Or Severely Chronic:

- Painful joints.
- High or mild fevers.
- Rashes caused by sun exposure.
- Hair loss
- Loss of circulation in toes or fingers.
- Swelling in the legs.
- Ulcers inside the mouth.
- Swollen glands.
- Extreme tiredness.

Neonatal Lupus - Another very rare condition. When a mother develops a certain kind of lupus antibodies, she inadvertently transfers them to her child at the time of birth. It is possible for the mother to have these antibodies without having any of the forms of lupus herself. Actually 40% of the mothers of babies with neonatal lupus develop the disease itself. Symptoms in a child are: rash, anemia, and, occasionally juvenile, or childhood lupus. Systemic Lupus has also been diagnosed in children. Of the one's diagnosed, the symptoms are the same as in adult lupus. Juvenile lupus is very prevalent in young boys and is more likely to attack the kidneys. The treatments are very aggressive, and far more antagonistic than those given to adults.
Other Symptoms Depend On Which Part Of The Body Is Affected:

**Brain and nervous system:** headaches, numbness, tingling, seizures, vision problems.

**Digestive tract:** abdominal pain, nausea, and vomiting.

**Heart:** abnormal heart rhythms (arrhythmias).

**Lung:** coughing up blood and difficulty breathing.

**Skin:** patchy skin color, fingers that change color when cold (Raynaud's Phenomenon).

Some people have only skin symptoms, which is also called Discoid Lupus. Although similar there are differences between Discoid, & Cutaneous Lupus.
**Complications & Unfavorable Progressions of LUPUS**

**Kidneys** - Lupus can cause serious kidney damage. One of the primary causes of death is kidney failure. Some of the signs of kidney problems are generalized itching, chest pain, nausea, vomiting and leg swelling or (edema). Also known as, "pitting" after pressure is applied to a small area, the indentation persists after the pressure is released.

**Brain** - When the brain is affected by lupus, you will experience headaches, dizziness, behavioral changes, and hallucinations. It is also common to encounter strokes or seizures. Many people will experience what is known as brain fog. Others can find it difficult to focus their thoughts.

**Blood & Blood Vessels** - Lupus can also lead to blood problems, anemia, and increased risk of bleeding & blood clotting. People can also develop inflammation of the blood vessels, or vasculitis.

**Lungs** - People with lupus can develop inflammation of the chest cavity lining or (pleurisy), which makes breathing painful.

**Heart** - There is also inflammation of the heart muscles. The arteries, and heart membrane pericarditis. Cardiovascular disease, and heart attack risk is increased.
**Infection** - People suffering from lupus are vulnerable to infection. The risk of infection is heightened from the disease itself, and the treatments. This can inhibit the immune system. Some of these infections are urinary tract, respiratory, and yeast infections. Also salmonella, herpes, and shingles.

**Cancer** - There is also the risk of cancer. The threat of cancer is greatly increased. You should be checked regularly by a physician for any signs.

**Avascular Necrosis** - This develops when the blood supply to a bone is diminished. Tiny breaks in the bone develop, leading to the bone's collapse. The hip joint is a common area.

**Pregnancy** - The risk of miscarriage is increased. The risk of high blood pressure during pregnancy is also increased. Also called *(preeclampsia)*, and preterm birth. To help reduce the chance of this happening doctors will often recommend delaying pregnancy. This can be up to 6 months, or until the disease is under control.
Diagnosing lupus is very difficult. The signs vary from person to person. No two people diagnosed are going to be the same. Lupus symptoms can fluctuate over time, and overlap with other diseases such as Polymyositis. There are a number of test used to diagnose lupus. It takes more than one to determine it fully. The combination of blood, and urine tests, signs and symptoms, and physical examination findings lead to a factual diagnosis.

**Blood Count** - This test can count the number of red & white blood cells, platelets and the amount of hemoglobin. Hemoglobin is a protein found in red blood cells. The results can verify if you have anemia, which is a common incidence in lupus patients. A low white blood cell or platelet count can also be seen.

**Kidney & Liver Assessment** - Such testing can determine how well the kidneys and liver function. Lupus is known to affect the internal organs of the body.

**Urinalysis** - A urine sample can some times show an increase of protein or red blood cells, which can develop if lupus has an influence on your kidneys.

**Erythrocyte Sedimentation Rate** - This form of testing determines the rate at which red blood cells settle to the bottom of a test tube in an hour. When the settling rate is faster than normal it might specify a systemic disease. The sedimentation rate is different for every disease. It can also be elevated if you have lupus. This also applies to other inflammatory conditions, cancer or infection.

The Diagnoses

Symptoms Used to Diagnose Lupus

- Butterfly Rash
- Sunlight Triggered Rash
- Mouth & Nasal Sores
- Joint Swelling
- Inflammation of the lining of the heart & lungs.
- Urine Abnormalities
- Seizures or Psychosis
- Anemia
- Discoid Rash
- Positive ANA
- Other Antibody Test
Image Testing

**Chest X-ray** - A chest x-ray may display abnormal shadows that can suggest fluid or inflammation in your lungs.

**Echocardiogram** - Sound waves can be used to produce a real-time image of your heart as it beats. Valves and other portions of your heart can be properly checked for any problems.

Kidney Biopsy

Lupus can damage your kidneys in multiple ways. When this happens treatments can vary. All of this depends on the type of damage that takes place in the kidney. It is often necessary to test a small sample of kidney tissue. This can help determine what the best treatment should be. A needle can be used, or a small incision can be done to acquire a sufficient sample.

**Antinuclear Antibody or (ANA)** - If you should test positive for the presence of antibodies, (produced by your immune system), it will indicate an overstimulated immune system. A lot of people with lupus have a positive ANA test. There are a number of people with a positive ANA that do not have lupus. If you test positive your doctor may recommend more specific testing for evidence of other antibodies.
Getting Treated

Treating lupus depends on the signs, symptoms, and which particular form you have. Your doctor will discuss with you the treatment involved, as well as the risk that goes along with medications. As the disease progresses, you will have to endure the changes of medications, and treatments to ensure proper care. All of which are normal procedures.

Some Of The Medications Commonly Used To Treat People With The Symptoms Of Lupus Are:

**Corticosteroids** - Prednisone and other types of corticosteroids can counteract the inflammation of lupus. The long-term use of these drugs can produce long-term side effects. Such as weight gain, aggressive behavior, mood swings, bruising easily, thinning bones (*osteoporosis*), high blood pressure, diabetes, and heighten threat of infection. The threat of side effects increases greatly with higher doses, and long term use.

**Antimalarial Drugs** - Hydroxy-Chloroquine or (*Plaquenil*), can help suppress lupus, and the immune system. It is also used to treat people who suffer from Malaria. There have been cases where people are allergic to this drug. It can cause the symptoms of lupus to worsen. The symptoms reduce after use of the drug has been stopped. Side effects can include an upset stomach, and on rare occasions damage to the retina of the eye. People using this drug are recommended to get their eyes checked regularly.

**Immuno Suppressants** - Drugs that suppress, or subdue the immune system may be helpful in severe cases of lupus, and other auto-immune disorders. For example: Cyclophosphamide (*Cytoxan*), Azathioprine (*Imuran, Azasan*), Mycophenolate (*Cellcept*), Leflunomide (*Arava*) and Methotrexate (*Trexall*). All of these are some of the most common drugs used to treat Auto-immune diseases. Side effects to these are an increased risk of infection, liver damage, decreased fertility, an increased risk of cancer. A newer medication called Belimumumab or (*Benlysta*), also reduces lupus symptoms in some people. Some of the side effects are nausea, diarrhea and fever.

**Non - Steroidal Anti - inflammatory Drugs, or (NSAIDs)** - NSAIDs, such as naproxen (*Aleve*), and ibuprofen (*Advil, Motrin, etc.*), are frequently used to treat Lupus symptoms. These are pain, swelling, and fever. More aggressive drugs, or NSAIDs are available through prescription request. Side effects of NSAIDs range from stomach bleeding, kidney problems, to the augmented risk of heart complications.
**Self Help Aids**

**Adequate Rest** - People with lupus will endure constant fatigue that's different from normal tiredness. This form of fatigue can not be relieved by rest. Because of this it is often hard to determine when you need to slow down. Get plenty of sleep at night, and take naps or breaks though out the day.

**Sun Smart** - Ultraviolet light can trigger a flare. Wear protective clothing. Examples are, hat, long-sleeve shirts, and long pants. Also use sunscreens with a sun protection factor (SPF) of at least 55 spf.

**Exercise Regularly** - Exercising can help you recover from a flare-up. Also help reduce the risk of a heart attack. Other benefits are mood enhancement, and the overall feeling of a positive mindset.

**Don't Smoke** - Smoking increases the threat of cardiovascular disease, and can worsen the effects of lupus on your heart and blood vessels. Also increases the risk of cancer.

**Alternative Aids**

**Dehydroepiandrosterone or DHEA** - Supplements containing this hormone have been shown to reduce the dose of steroids needed to stabilize symptoms in some people who suffer from lupus. It is also known as Fidelin, Ovomax, Androstenolone or Prasterone.

**Flaxseed** - Flaxseed contains a fatty acid called Alpha-linolenic. This seed helps to decrease inflammation in the body. Studies suggest that Flaxseed may improve kidney function in people with lupus. Side effects of Flaxseed include bloating, and abdominal pain.

**Fish Oil** - Fish oil contains omega-3 fatty acids. Side effects of fish oil supplements can include nausea, belching, and a fishy taste in the mouth. It is also known as, Eicosapentaenoic Acid (EPA), or Docosahexaenoic Acid DHA.

**Vitamin D** - There is some evidence to suggest that people with lupus can benefit from vitamin D. As the threat of Avascular Necrosis, and the effects of Prednisone can cause bones to deteriorate and crack. Adequate amounts of Vitamin - D can help to strengthen Vulnerable bones, and fight the effects of both.

**The Prognoses**

The outcome for people with Lupus / SLE has improved in recent years. How well you do depends on how severe the disease is, and how soon your diagnosed. The disease tends to be more active in people under 40, in the beginning stages of diagnoses. This is not to say their less fortunate than others. The disease will be active regardless of your age, and even through remission. People have managed to live productive lives, and still keep the diseases under control. As the future unfolds, the outcome looks brighter. Each day brings them closer to a cure.
For More Information On Autoimmune Diseases And Other Related Conditions:

Website:  weishendopublications.com

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Current views of health and illness recognize health as more than the absence of disease. Realizing that humans are dynamic beings whose state of health can change from day today or even from hour to hour, leaders in the health field suggest that it is better to think of each person as being located on a graduated scale or continuous spectrum (continuum) ranging from obvious dire illness through the absence of discernible disease to a state of optimal functioning in every aspect of one's life. High-level wellness is described as a dynamic process in which the individual is actively engaged in moving toward fulfillment of his or her potential.

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