



**LUPUS WA**

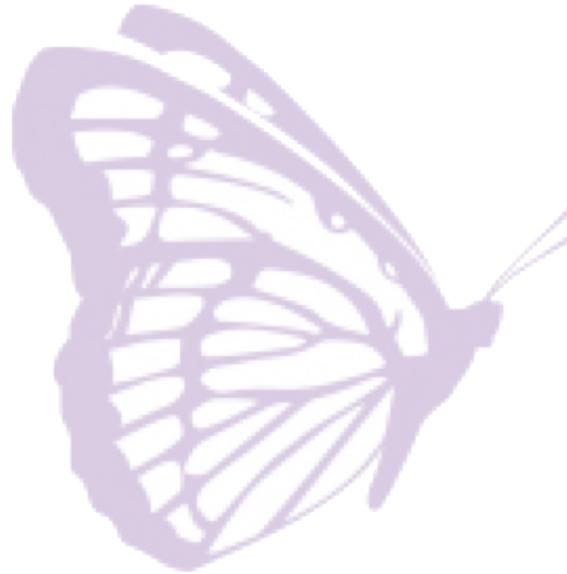
*Support*

Lupus WA provides one on one, small group, telephone and email support to lupus patients and their families.

## Support Groups

Lupus Support Group meetings are held on the first Wednesday of each month. The support group is a great way to get connected and meet other people living with lupus.

In this group we all have lupus in common and we understand the impact of living with lupus. Come along, share your experiences, receive encouragement and learn from each other in a safe and supportive environment.



**LUPUS WA**

## Contact Us

For more information about Lupus, to access support and to register your interest in attending a Lupus Support Group Meeting contact Lupus WA at:

Phone: (08) 9388 2199

Email: [admin@lupuswa.com.au](mailto:admin@lupuswa.com.au)

(Lupus WA is a voluntary non-profit patient focused organisation)



## Be Lupus Wise

*"It may save your life, or the life of someone your love."*

[www.lupuswa.com.au](http://www.lupuswa.com.au)

# What is Lupus?



Lupus is a chronic and complex autoimmune disease. In lupus, the immune system which is designed to protect the body against infection creates antibodies that attack the body's own tissues and organs. It can affect any tissue and organ "head to toe" in the body. If left undiagnosed and untreated lupus can have devastating and even fatal consequences.

Lupus takes its name from the Latin word "lupus" meaning wolf. This is because in some people with lupus, a lupus caused facial rash is reminiscent of the bite or scratch from a wolf. This rash is often positioned across the cheeks and the bridge of the nose resembling the wings of a butterfly.

## Types of Lupus

Although 'lupus' is used as a general term, there are four main types of lupus.

These are:

- **Systemic lupus erythematosus (SLE)**  
This form of lupus is probably what most people mean when they refer to lupus. SLE can cause inflammation and damage in multiple organs and body systems, including the kidneys, brain and central nervous system, blood and blood vessels, skin, lungs, heart and joints. This type is the most frequent form of lupus.

- **Discoid lupus (DLE)**  
It affects the skin and can leave residual scarring. It is also referred to as cutaneous lupus.
- **Drug induced lupus (DILE)**  
This can be triggered by certain prescription medications such as beta blockers, which are commonly used to treat heart disease and hypertension.
- **Neonatal lupus (NLE)**  
This is a rare type of lupus that can affect newborn babies, whose mothers carry a specific type of lupus related antibody. It is caused by the antibodies from the mother acting upon the baby in the womb. At birth the baby may have a skin rash, liver problems, or a low blood cell count. However, these symptoms usually disappear after several months with no lasting effects. In some very rare cases, neonatal lupus can cause a serious heart problem.

It is estimated that lupus affects one in 700 Australians. Because lupus symptoms mimic many other diseases often it is difficult to diagnose, it may be misdiagnosed, or it may remain undiagnosed.

Lupus mainly affects women, but can also affect men and children. International research reflects that lupus is a leading cause of premature cardiovascular disease, kidney disease and stroke among young women.

## Eleven Criteria

The American College of Rheumatology identified a list of 11 criteria for classifying a possible systemic lupus diagnosis.

The presence of at least four of these criteria can potentially lead to a lupus diagnosis.

These criteria are:

1. Malar rash (butterfly rash)
  2. Discoid rash
  3. Photosensitivity
  4. Oral and nasal ulcers
  5. Non erosive arthritis
  6. Pleuritic or pericarditis
  7. Renal disorder
  8. Neurologic disorder
  9. Hematologic disorder
  10. Immunologic disorder; and
  11. Positive antinuclear antibody.
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A full explanation of the criteria is available at [www.rheumatology.org](http://www.rheumatology.org)

Early detection and treatment is the key to better health outcomes and can usually lessen the progression and severity of the disease. If you suspect you may have lupus see your doctor for diagnosis, treatment and advice. Your doctor may refer you to an immunologist or rheumatologist for further tests and treatment.

(References: Garvan Institute of Medical Research, Lupus Research Alliance, Molly's Fund Fighting Lupus, Lupus Foundation of America, American College of Immunology)