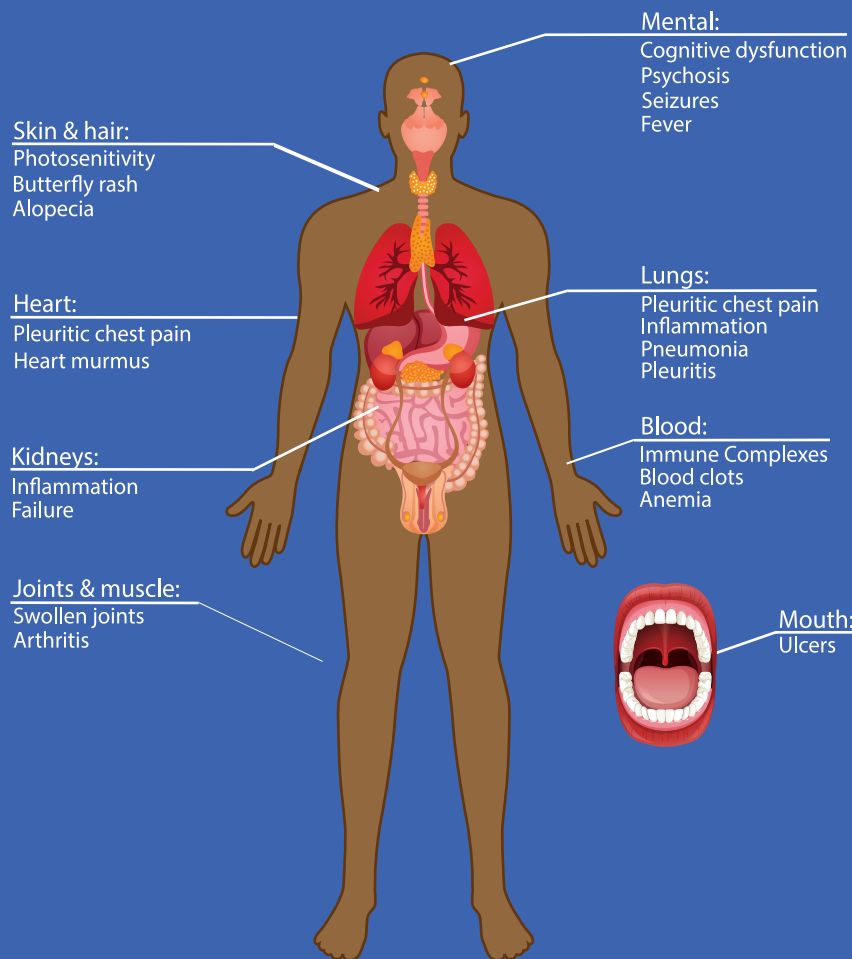


Classification
















What is it?

SLE is a chronic inflammatory auto-immune disorder in which the body's own defence system attacks its own tissues.



- **One or more organs** may be affected.
- **Root cause unknown**, although genetics may play a role.
- **Females, age 15-40**, are more affected than men.

Symptoms

-  Fever
-  Weight loss
-  Fatigue and feeling unwell
-  Psychosis
-  Course of disease is unpredictable
-  Joint pain and swelling, muscle aches
-  Seizures
-  Disease may vary in activity from time to time
-  Swollen glands
-  Mouth sores
-  Skin rashes and photosensitivity
-  Hair loss
-  Nausea and vomiting
-  Blood in urine
-  Chest pain



How it presents



Skin: A malar (butterfly) rash over the cheeks and bridge of the nose, which is made worse by sun exposure (can also be seen on other parts of the body).



Kidneys: Lupus nephritis (persistent inflammation of the kidneys) in half of diagnosed SLE patients.



Blood (85% of SLE patients): Blood clots can lead to strokes or pulmonary embolisms (clots in lungs). Some patients experience clotting deficiencies or anaemia.



Nervous system: Mild mental dysfunction, headaches, seizures, psychosis and brain function loss (organic brain syndrome).



Bones and muscles: Arthritis in hands, fingers, wrists and knees.

Medication



- **Anti-inflammatories** for joint pain
- **Steroids**
- **Disease modifying drugs**
- **Gamma globulin** to increase immunity and fight infections
- **Any side-effects should be reported** and monitored.

TREATMENT

- Learn as much as you can about your disease to understand it better.
- Accept support from family and friends.
- May vary according to different presenting symptoms.
- Maintaining general good health can prevent flare-ups.
- Avoid mental and physical stress.
- Adequate rest.