CRUSH

Lupus and Your Skin

Maureen Riegert, MD, FAAD 12/7/24

How does lupus affect the skin?

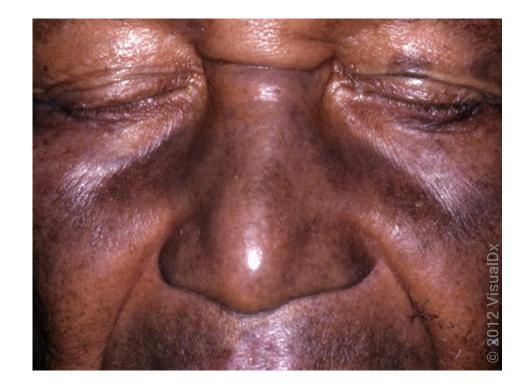
- Lupus can affect the skin in many ways. Some ways that it appears on the skin include:
- A widespread rash on your back
- A butterfly-shaped rash on your face
- Thick, scaly patches on your face
- Sores inside your mouth or nose
- A flare-up on your skin that looks like a sunburn
- Sometimes, the rashes, sores, and other lesions burn or itch.

Cutaneous Lupus

- Can have cutaneous lupus alone or with systemic lupus
- Skin biopsy can help to confirm the diagnosis of lupus and rule out other causes of rash
 - Rosacea, dermatomyositis, psoriasis, seborrheic dermatitis
- Can develop SLE after having cutaneous lupus
- Dermatologist is best to determine if skin rash is lupus and if workup for SLE is needed with labs or rheumatology referral
- Subtypes of cutaneous lupus

Acute Cutaneous Lupus





Acute Cutaneous Lupus







ORUSH

Subacute Cutaneous Lupus



Discoid Lupus





ORUSH

Discoid Lupus









Common Triggers of Cutaneous lupus

- Ultraviolet (UV) light Sunlight, tanning beds, and fluorescent light bulbs expose you to UV light
- Cigarette smoke
- An infection
- Some medications
- Stress
- Surgery or a serious injury

Photosensitivity

- Lupus increased photosensitivity
 – increased risk of sunburns and flares of rashes with sun exposure
- Increased sun exposure can increase systemic disease in SLE
- Avoidance of other photosensitizing medications (doxycycline, hydrochlorothiazide)
- Check vitamin D levels

Treatment of active cutaneous lupus

How do dermatologists treat lupus on the skin?

- Reduce (or clear) the rashes, sores, and other skin problems
- Relieve symptoms like itch and pain
- Diminish flare-ups
- Prevent scarring (some types of lupus can cause scarring)
- Stop irreversible hair loss (discoid lupus)
- Even out skin tone if you have color changes
- Treat scarring (if has happened)

Topical Medications

- Corticosteroids strength depends on location of active rash and how inflamed it is
- Can do injections of steroids for thicker spots
- Calcineurin inhibitors tacrolimus better for the face and an alternative to topical steroids

Systemic Medications

- Hydroxychloroquine Plaquenil
 - Slow onset of action can take several months to see improvement
 - Less effective if you smoke
- Methotrexate
- Mycophenolate
- Oral retinoids
- Newer biologic medications

ORUSH

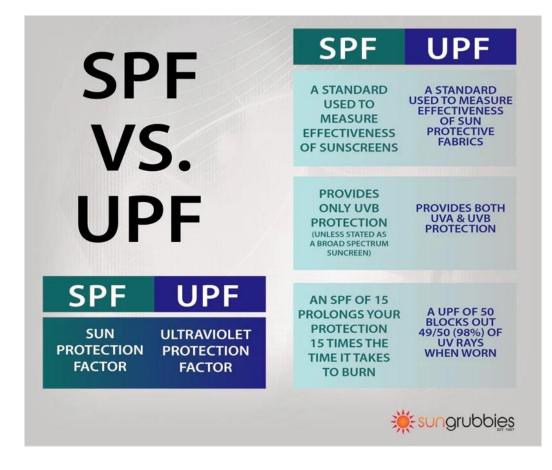
Sunscreen

- Important to help prevent flares of cutaneous lupus
- Also helpful in preventing skin cancer in chronically inflamed skin
- SPF 40 or greater daily
- Chemical vs Physical Sunscreen
- Tinted sunscreen
- Protective clothing

Sunscreen Tips

- Apply sunscreens every day regardless of the season.
- Apply 15-30 minutes before going outdoors; re-apply every two hours.
- Do not spare the sunscreen; 1 ounce (2 tablespoons) will cover unexposed surfaces on the average adult.
- Cover all exposed surfaces, including tops of ears, scalps where there is thinning or no hair, noses and bony surfaces.
- Water-resistant sunscreens lose their SPF after 40 minutes in water; waterproof sunscreens after 90 minutes. Re-apply as needed.
- Apply sunscreen lip balm to lips.
- Sunscreens should not be used to increase sun exposure time.
- Avoid tanning booths. Sun-bed use is a risk factor in the formation of melanoma.

ORUSH





























Sun Protection You Wear*







Heliocare

- Polypodium leucotomos extract – natural fern extract
- Antioxidant properties and protects from free radicals
- Added benefit for patients with lupus and sun sensitive skin
- Does not take the place of sunscreen



General Tips

- **Protect your skin from the sun every day.** Lupus can make your skin very sensitive to ultraviolet (UV) light, which can trigger a lupus rash or other skin problems. Sun protection can prevent flare ups and stop lupus from worsening.
- Don't use tanning beds
- Stop Smoking
- Stop touching the patches and rashes on your skin.
- Replace fluorescent, compact fluorescent, and halogen light bulbs

General Tips

- Before taking a medication, ask if it can increase light sensitivity.
- Ask your dermatologist if you need a vitamin D supplement.
- Protect your skin from the cold if you have Raynaud's phenomenon. Some people who have cutaneous lupus develop this condition, which makes their fingers and toes extra sensitive to cold.



General Tips

- Keep all your dermatology appointments. If you have cutaneous lupus, it can take time to diagnose this condition. It can also take time to find a treatment plan that works for you.
- If you see anything on your skin that is different from others, or that changes, itches, or bleeds, see your dermatologist.
- Before trying an herb, vitamin, or other alternative treatment, tell your dermatologist. Some of these may interact with medications that you use to treat lupus on your skin, causing unwanted side effects.

Thank you! Questions?

