



Lupus and Your Skin

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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



Subacute Cutaneous Lupus



Discoid Lupus



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

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.

SPF VS. UPF

SPF	UPF
SUN PROTECTION FACTOR	ULTRAVIOLET PROTECTION FACTOR

SPF	UPF
A STANDARD USED TO MEASURE EFFECTIVENESS OF SUNSCREENS	A STANDARD USED TO MEASURE EFFECTIVENESS OF SUN PROTECTIVE FABRICS
PROVIDES ONLY UVB PROTECTION (UNLESS STATED AS A BROAD SPECTRUM SUNSCREEN)	PROVIDES BOTH UVA & UVB PROTECTION
AN SPF OF 15 PROLONGS YOUR PROTECTION 15 TIMES THE TIME IT TAKES TO BURN	A UPF OF 50 BLOCKS OUT 49/50 (98%) OF UV RAYS WHEN WORN











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- 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?