### What is lupus?

Lupus is an autoimmune disease, which is a disease where the auto-antibodies are produced. Instead of producing normal antibodies to protect the body from infection, antibodies with SLE are produced and attack healthy cells.°

### Systemic Lupus Erythematosus (SLE)

It principally affects women IP in 20 patients are female, with highest risk for onset of SLE during childbearing age.\(^{2,10}\)

### Prevalence

SLE is uncommon, affecting approx. 40-100 people per 100,000.

### Signs and symptoms

SLE can affect any of the major organs in the body and symptoms can vary greatly in severity and intensity.

Some of the most common symptoms include:

- **Fatigue**: A general feeling of tiredness that does not improve with rest.
- **Joint pain**.
- **Skin rash**.
- **Butterfly-shaped rash**.
- **Light sensitivity**.
- **Swelling in hands and feet**.

### Diagnosis

The early diagnosis of SLE is difficult due to the non-specific signs, symptoms, and can lead to premature death.°External signs of the disease may be few.

Classification is based on evidence of 11 objective criteria devised by the American College of Rheumatology.\(^{1,7}\)

### Recognising and reporting symptoms

Findings from a global survey showed that SLE patients often do not report all of their symptoms to their doctors, as they do not associate them with the disease.\(^{2,13}\)

Almost three quarters of SLE patients agreed that they only report the symptoms that they think are the most and often postpone their symptoms when talking with their doctor.\(^{2,13}\)

Fatigue, sensitivity to light and muscle and joint pain are most likely to be reported by SLE patients as severe symptoms.\(^{2,13}\)

### Treatment

Current treatment for SLE varies widely, including:

1. Reducing disease activity
2. Treating symptoms and flares
3. Reducing organ damage

Physicians face difficult balancing of treating symptoms while attempting to minimize adverse events.°


### References

20. Findings from a global survey showed that SLE patients often do not report all of their symptoms to their doctors, as they do not associate them with the disease.\(^{2,13}\)
21. Almost three quarters of SLE patients agreed that they only report the symptoms that they think are the most and often postpone their symptoms when talking with their doctor.\(^{2,13}\)
22. Many patients experience significant delays in diagnosis.\(^{1,7}\)