

# How Lupus Affects the Body

In patients with systemic lupus erythematosus (lupus), the immune system attacks the patient's own body. This can cause damage to many parts of the body. As a result, you may have symptoms. These can include feeling tired, getting skin rashes, or having pain in your joints and muscles.

## Lupus from Head to Toe

Lupus may affect one or more of the areas shown to the right. Place a check mark next to the part(s) of the body that most concern you.

## Silent Effects of Lupus

Lupus can also cause serious problems that you may not see or feel. For example:

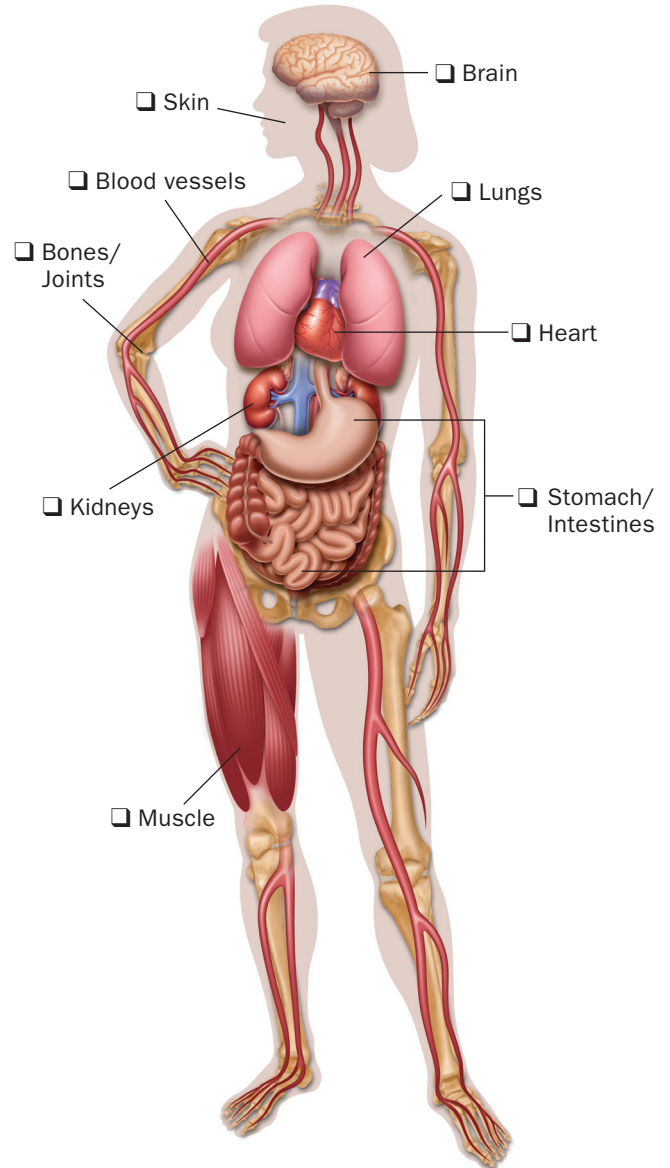
- *Lupus and the kidneys*—Inflamed kidneys may not work correctly. Your healthcare provider may do blood and urine tests to check the health of your kidneys. Over time, inflammation of the kidneys may result in permanent damage.
- *Lupus and blood vessels*—Inflamed blood vessels affect the way blood moves through the body. People with lupus are at increased risk for hardening of the arteries. This can lead to high blood pressure, heart attacks, and strokes.
- *Lupus and blood cells*—Lupus can also affect cells in the blood. People with lupus may have fewer white blood cells. These cells help fight infection. People with lupus may also have fewer platelets. Platelets help in blood clotting. Having fewer platelets can lead to easy bruising and bleeding.

Use the space below to write down your concerns, and share them with your provider:

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**Tell your healthcare provider how you feel, and share your concerns. Your provider may be able to help you manage your symptoms better.**



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