



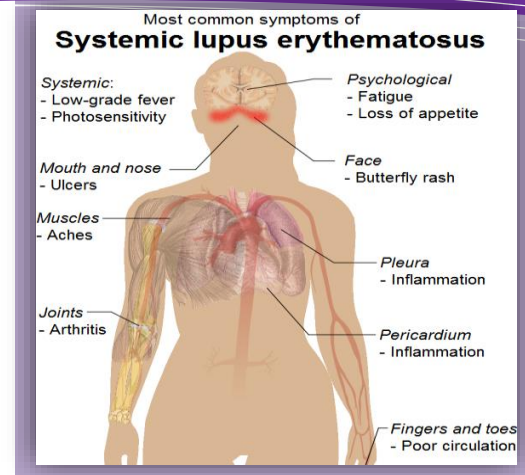
OLDER  
AMERICANS  
MONTH

BLAZE A TRAIL: MAY 2016

Older Americans Month is an annual event dating back to 1963, when President John F. Kennedy designated May as Senior Citizens Month. It was later renamed Older Americans Month, honoring older Americans and celebrating their contributions to our communities and our nation.

Administration on Community Living Resources (ACL)

Theme: The ACL sets the theme for Older Americans Month. The 2016 theme is "Blaze a Trail," acknowledging the perennial contributions of older adults to our nation and celebrating how older adults take charge of their health, get engaged in their communities, and make a positive impact in the lives of others.



## *Understanding Lupus...the Basics*

Lupus is an autoimmune disease, which means that the immune system mistakes the body's own tissues as foreign invaders and attacks them. Some people with lupus suffer only minor inconvenience. Others suffer significant lifelong disability.

Lupus affects people of African, Asian, or Native American descent two to three times as often as it affects whites. Nine out of 10 people with lupus are women. The disease usually strikes between age 15 and 44, although it can occur in older individuals.

### **There are two kinds of lupus:**

- Discoid lupus erythematosus (DLE)
- Systemic lupus erythematosus (SLE)

**DLE** mainly affects skin that is exposed to sunlight and doesn't typically affect vital internal organs. Discoid (circular) skin lesions often leave scars after healing of the lesions.

**SLE** is more serious: It affects the skin and other vital organs, and can cause a raised, scaly, butterfly-shaped rash across the bridge of the nose and cheeks that can leave scars if untreated. SLE can also affect other parts of the skin elsewhere on the body.

Aside from the visible effects of systemic lupus, the disease may also inflame and/or damage the connective tissue in the joints, muscles, and skin, along with the membranes surrounding or within the lungs, heart, kidneys, and brain. SLE can also cause kidney disease. Brain involvement is rare, but for some, lupus can cause confusion, depression, seizures, and strokes.

Blood vessels may come under attack with systemic lupus. This can cause sores to develop on the skin, especially the fingers.



Some lupus patients get Raynaud's syndrome, which makes the small blood vessels in the skin contract, preventing blood from getting to the hands and feet -- especially in response to cold. Most attacks last only a few minutes, can be painful, and often turn the hands and feet white or a bluish color. Lupus patients with Raynaud's syndrome should keep their hands warm with gloves during cold weather.

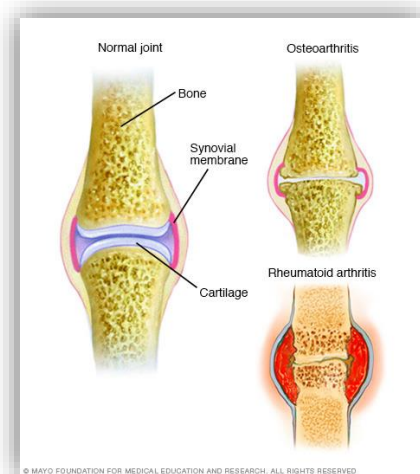
### What Causes Lupus?

No single factor is known to cause lupus. Research suggests that a combination of genetic, hormonal, environmental, and immune system factors may be behind it. Environmental factors, ranging from viral and bacterial infections to severe emotional stress or overexposure to sunlight, may play a role in provoking or triggering the disease. Certain drugs, such as the blood pressure drug hydralazine and the heart rhythm drug procainamide, may cause lupus-like symptoms. High estrogen levels resulting from pregnancy may aggravate lupus.

## *Arthritis-An Overview*

Arthritis is inflammation of one or more of your joints. The main symptoms of arthritis are joint pain and stiffness, which typically worsen with age. The most common types of arthritis are osteoarthritis and rheumatoid arthritis.

Osteoarthritis causes cartilage — the hard, slippery tissue that covers the ends of bones where they form a joint — to break down. Rheumatoid arthritis is an autoimmune disorder that first targets the lining of joints (synovium). Uric acid crystals, infections or underlying disease, such as psoriasis or lupus, can cause other types of arthritis. Treatments vary depending on the type of arthritis. The main goals of arthritis treatments are to reduce symptoms and improve quality of life.



### Causes

**Osteoarthritis**-The most common type of arthritis, osteoarthritis involves wear-and-tear damage to your joint's cartilage — the hard, slick coating on the ends of bones. **Rheumatoid arthritis**-In rheumatoid arthritis, the body's immune system attacks the lining of the joint capsule, a tough membrane that encloses all the joint parts. This lining, known as the synovial membrane, becomes inflamed and swollen.

### Treatment

**Medications**-The medications used to treat arthritis vary depending on the type of arthritis.

**Therapy**-Physical therapy can be helpful for some types of arthritis. Exercises can improve range of motion and strengthen the muscles surrounding joints. In some cases, splints or braces may be warranted.

**Surgery**-If conservative measures don't help, your doctor may suggest surgery to repair, replace or fuse the joint.

In His service,  
H-3 ministry

*1 Corinthians 10:31 "So whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God" (NIV)*

**References:** <http://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/arthritis/home/ovc-20168903>; <http://www.speakersformurses.com/Planning/WNHWeek.htm>;  
<http://www.agingkingcounty.org/olderamericansmonth/>