

About us

The Lupus Foundation of Australasia is dedicated to empowering people affected by lupus by advancing research, raising public awareness, and providing trusted support and education.

Built on the belief that no one should face lupus alone, we serve as a bridge between medical science and everyday life, helping individuals, and carers understand, manage and advocate for better outcomes.

Through collaboration, advocacy and communications, we aim to shorten the time to diagnosis, improve access to evidence-based care, and ensure everyone with lupus is supported, heard and valued.

For more information on how lupus is diagnosed

Please visit the Lupus Foundation of Australasia at:
www.lupusfoundationaustralasia.org/resources

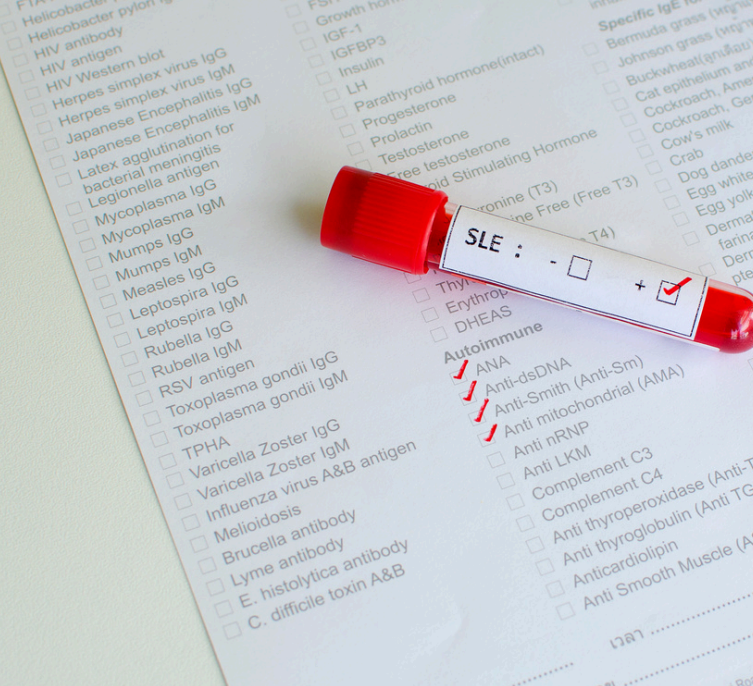
References: 1. Lupus Foundation of America. *Diagnosing lupus*. Accessed 2025.
2. ArthritisCARE. *Lupus treatment*. Accessed 2025.

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Diagnosing Lupus



How is lupus diagnosed?¹⁻²

Lupus can be difficult to diagnose because there's no single test that gives a "yes" or "no" answer.

Doctors use different tests to piece together the diagnosis and check how the disease may be affecting your body.

What your doctor may ask¹⁻²

They often start with questions about you symptoms including:

- when they began, how often they occur and what makes them better or worse.
- whether they affect your daily life.

They may also ask about family history of lupus or autoimmune diseases.

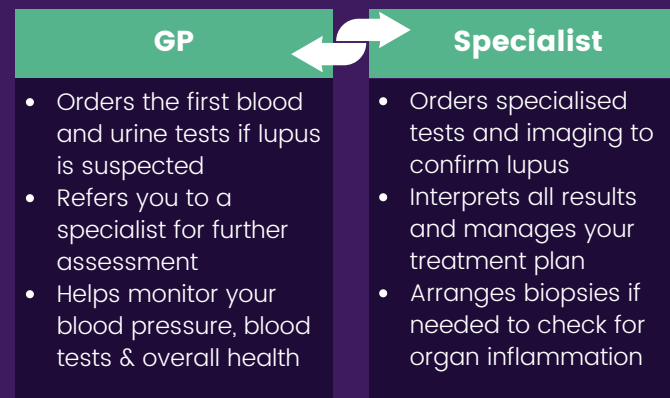
Symptoms doctors look for¹⁻²

- Fatigue and joint pain/swelling
- Rashes (including the butterfly rash), skin sensitivity, hair loss
- Fever, headaches, chest pain, swelling in hands, feet and eyes
- Blood problems such as anaemia, clots, or Raynaud's phenomenon

Who is involved in diagnosing lupus?¹⁻²

Your GP is your first point of contact. They may conduct a physical examination, initial tests, and refer you onto a specialist doctor, including a rheumatologist or immunologist for further assessment.

The specialist then confirms the diagnosis and plans your treatment. Together, they coordinate ongoing monitoring and care.



Tests your doctor might order¹⁻²

Blood test

These can show how your immune system is working and if there are signs of inflammation.

Common blood tests include:

- Complete blood count (CBC) – measures red cells, white cells and platelets
- Antibody tests – check if your immune system is attacking healthy tissue
- Clotting tests – show if lupus is affecting your blood's ability to clot
- Complement levels – low levels may point to inflammation or active disease

Urine test

Urine can reveal early signs of kidney problems. Sometimes only a single test is needed; other times, repeated samples are checked to monitor changes.

Biopsies

Your specialist may remove a small sample of skin or tissue (often from the kidney) to look for inflammation or organ damage under the microscope.

