Lupus

Lupus is an autoimmune disease that can affect many organ systems in different ways. The cause of lupus is unknown, but is thought to be a combination of genetic, environmental and hormonal factors.1,2

There are 4 main types of lupus:3–4:

Systemic lupus erythematosus (SLE)
- Most common type, representing about 70% of all lupus cases
- Commonly referred to as just ‘lupus’
- Can affect almost any organ system, including the skin and joints, and can also cause fatigue
- Up to ~60% of SLE patients develop lupus nephritis (inflammation of the kidney)5
- Treated with medications and lifestyle changes; limited therapeutic options exist
- 40%-60% of patients with SLE may not adequately respond to treatment6

Drug-induced lupus (DIL)10
- Occurs after exposure to certain medications
- Can affect various organ systems
- Symptoms will typically go away once the medication is stopped

Cutaneous lupus erythematosus (CLE):7
- Three types of cutaneous lupus: discoid (DLE), subacute (SCLE) and acute (ACLE)
- Limited to the skin, causing red, scaly rash
- 5%-25% of patients with CLE may develop SLE7
- CLE may occur in patients with SLE
- Can often be managed with medications and lifestyle changes

Neonatal and pediatric lupus erythematosus (NLE):9
- Rare condition that may affect newborns of women who have SLE
- Caused by antibodies from the mother that impact the child
- Usually affects the heart, liver and skin
- Typically resolves in 4 to 6 months with no lasting effects

Treatment of lupus will depend on the type, signs and symptoms and severity of the disease.1

Who is Impacted by Lupus?
9 out of 10 lupus patients are women.4
SLE predominantly impacts women of childbearing age.12
Women from racial and ethnic minority groups: 4,13
- Tend to develop lupus at a younger age
- Experience more serious complications
- Have higher mortality rates

Cutaneous lupus is a rash on the skin, commonly affecting areas that are exposed to the sun. The rash may be itchy, painful or tender. Some cases of cutaneous lupus can lead to systemic lupus erythematosus (SLE).8

Diagnosis & Treatment
Diagnosing lupus can be challenging due to the many parts of the body it can affect and the varying symptoms from person to person. No one test can diagnose lupus.11 Different types of lupus will require different evaluations and considerations by healthcare providers.

Tests may include:
- Complete blood count and erythrocyte sedimentation rate
- Liver and kidney assessments
- Urine analysis
- Antinuclear antibody test
- X-rays and echocardiograms
- Skin biopsy

Lupus is typically managed by a multidisciplinary care team with close involvement of a rheumatologist.

Bristol Myers Squibb is committed to identifying and pursuing new treatment options to help deliver transformational medicines for patients with lupus and other immune-mediated diseases.

References: