

## There are four types of lupus. They are:

- **Discoid lupus erythematosus:** This type affects the skin and is also known as cutaneous lupus.
- **Drug-induced lupus erythematosus:** Drug-induced lupus can occur as a side effect of some drugs, such as beta blockers, which are commonly used to treat heart disease and hypertension.
- **Neonatal lupus erythematosus:** This is a rare form of lupus in newborn babies, whose mothers have lupus, and can cause problems at birth or in rare cases, a serious heart defect.
- **Systemic lupus erythematosus:** Systemic lupus causes inflammation in multiple organs and body systems.

## Do we know what causes lupus?

First of all, it is important to know that lupus is not contagious. Secondly, it is a fact that even medical professionals and researchers cannot say for certain what causes lupus. Most of those in medical and research professions will agree that several factors might determine an individual's likelihood to develop lupus.

- **Genetics:** While a family history of lupus does not mean an individual will get lupus, it can determine a person's likelihood for the disease.
- **Environment:** Research is being conducted regarding environmental factors that may play a role in being a trigger for lupus. Exposure to UV light (photosensitivity), smoking, stress, or toxins may or may not be contributing factors.
- **Hormones and Illness:** Because of the fact that women in their childbearing years are the most common demographic afflicted with lupus, research is suggesting that higher levels of hormones, such as estrogen and progesterone, are linked to auto-immune diseases like lupus. People affected with viruses and bacteria, such as parvovirus, hepatitis C, or Epstein-Barr (EBV) may develop lupus, but a direct causal link has not been established.
- **Medications:** Some medications are suspected triggers of lupus and can cause lupus flares. Drug-induced lupus is based on this theory. Often, once a patient with drug-induced lupus stops taking the medications suspected of inducing the lupus, the symptoms can decline rapidly.
- **A Combination of Factors:** Many in the medical and research fields believe that a combination of all the above listed factors is likely more susceptible to getting lupus than a person with, perhaps, only one of the factors.