

## Lupus and pain

Pain in lupus can be come from joints, muscles, tendons or nerves. The cause of the pain as well as how much pain can change over time.

### What causes my pain?

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**Arthritis** (say “ar-THRY-tis”) is when you have pain, stiffness, swelling, and warmth in your joints.

**Arthragia** (“ar-THRAL-jah”) is when you have pain in your joint without swelling. Fingers, wrists, elbows, knees, ankles, and toes are more commonly affected joints.

**Myalgia** (“my-AL-jah”) is when you have pain in your muscle .

**Myositis** (“my-o-SYE-tis”) is inflammation of the muscles that causes weakness or loss of strength.

This often affects the muscles of your neck, shoulders, upper arms, pelvis and thighs.

**Tendonitis** (“ten-dah-NYE-tis”) or irritation of a tendon, is usually due to overuse of a joint. Pain is the major symptom of tendonitis. A tendon is a strong, rope-like structure made of tough fibers. Tendons attach muscle to bone.

The pain may not be due to your lupus. Your pain may be due to other medical problems, including:

- **Osteoporosis** (“os-tee-o-poh-RO-sis”): Broken bone due to brittle bones
- **Osteonecrosis** (“os-tee-o-neh-KRO-sis”): A bone disease. The ip is the most common place, but it can also happen in the knee or shoulder.
- Joint infection.
- **Fibromyalgia** (“fie-bro-my-AL-jah”) which also causes worsening fatigue, in addition to pain.

### How do I manage the pain?

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The cause of the pain and how bad it is will help determine how you and your doctor manage it. There are things you can do at home to help ease your pain. Sometimes your doctor may need to change your medicines.

## You can...

- **Apply heat or cold.** Some people get good relief from a moist hot pack or warm bath. Others find relief from ice or a cold pack. (Wrap the ice or cold pack in a towel before putting it on your skin.)
- **Relax.** Focus on your breathing, meditate, or do something you enjoy. This can help take your mind off the pain and help you get through the day.
- **Slow down.** Overdoing it can make joint pain worse. Take it easy when your joint symptoms are more active. Don't overdo it when you're feeling good. This can bring on joint pain.

## My doctor may...

- **Prescribe NSAIDs** (non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs). Your doctor will let you know if it's safe for you to take NSAIDs ("EN-sedz").
- **Prescribe acetaminophen** ("a-see-ta-MIN-o-fen"). Your doctor will let you know if it's safe for you to take acetaminophen (also known as TYLENOL®).
- **Prescribe specific lupus medicines.** Sometimes the arthritis is more severe and your doctor may need to adjust the lupus medicine you're already taking. Myositis may also require a change in your lupus medicines.
- **Prescribe a sleep aid.** If you're having trouble sleeping because of pain, your doctor may prescribe something to be used at bedtime.
- **Suggest treatments for fibromyalgia,** if your doctor says that's what you have.

## When should I be worried about my pain?

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If your pain is not decreasing like it usually does with your usual treatment, you should see your doctor to make sure there's nothing new. Contact your doctor to be seen right away if you have:

- Sudden severe pain in a single spot, especially in a bone; especially if you have brittle bones. There may also be some swelling. This could mean the bone is fractured.
- New pain in just one shoulder or one knee or one hip. Your doctor can do tests to make sure you don't have bone disease.
- Sudden severe pain, swelling and redness in one joint. This could be due to a joint infection. Joint infections need to be treated urgently.

## What's the doctor's phone number? (585) 486-0901