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Lupus

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Diagnosis

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Diagnosing lupus is difficult because signs and symptoms vary considerably from person to person. Signs and symptoms of lupus may vary over time and overlap with those of many other disorders.

No one test can diagnose lupus. The combination of blood and urine tests, signs and symptoms, and physical examination findings leads to the diagnosis.

Laboratory tests

Blood and urine tests may include:

- **Complete blood count.** This test measures the number of red blood cells, white blood cells and platelets as well as the amount of hemoglobin, a protein in red blood cells. Results may indicate you have anemia, which commonly occurs in lupus. A low white blood cell or platelet count may occur in lupus as well.
- **Erythrocyte sedimentation rate.** This blood test determines the rate at which red blood cells settle to the bottom of a tube in an hour. A faster than normal rate may indicate a systemic disease, such as lupus. The sedimentation rate isn't specific for any one disease. It may be elevated if you have lupus, an infection, another inflammatory condition or cancer.
- **Kidney and liver assessment.** Blood tests can assess how well your kidneys and liver are functioning. Lupus can affect these organs.
- **Urinalysis.** An examination of a sample of your urine may show an

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