

nutrition 101

Lupus

There's no specific diet that will cure lupus, but eating certain foods may help minimize symptoms.

Below are tips to reduce symptoms.

MINIMIZE YOUR SYMPTOMS

Limit or avoid inflammatory foods.

- Garlic: certain enzymes in garlic have been shown to trigger lupus symptoms
- Alfalfa: certain enzymes in alfalfa have been shown to trigger lupus symptoms
- Red meat
- Processed meats: hot dogs, bratwursts, sausages, deli meats
- Refined grains: white-flour based products (white bread, pasta, bagels, etc.)
- Sugary foods: sugar-sweetened beverages, pastries, cookies, candies, ice cream, cake
- Alcohol
- Fried foods
- Nightshades: specific plants, including tomatoes, potatoes, eggplant and peppers may cause an inflammatory reaction and worsen symptoms. Some patients with lupus may find that they are sensitive to these plants.

Choose antioxidant-rich foods (foods with nutrients that help to protect healthy cells)

- Fruits: strawberries, blueberries, cherries, blackberries, prunes, raspberries, pomegranates
- Vegetables: spinach, kale, collard greens, broccoli, cauliflower, Brussels sprouts, beets
- Herbs and spices: dried or ground turmeric, ginger, cinnamon

Include healthy fats that help to lower inflammation

- Fatty fish: salmon, mackerel, tuna, sardines
- Nuts & seeds: almonds, walnuts, ground flax seed, chia seeds
- Fruit: avocado
- Oil: extra virgin olive oil, walnut oil, avocado oil, flaxseed oil

Add fiber-rich foods to your plate to help lower inflammation, improve digestive and heart health, and keep blood sugar in control.

- Beans and legumes
- Fruits
- Vegetables
- Nuts and seeds
- Whole grains

Lupus can affect the kidneys in some patients. It's important to work with a dietitian to determine specific nutritional requirements for the following:

- Salt – patients often follow a low-sodium diet
- Protein - patients often follow a low-protein diet

Heartburn, also known as GERD, can be common in lupus

- Reduce intake of fried foods, full-fat dairy, and high-fat foods
- Limit intake of red and processed meats
- Reduce or avoid spicy foods, for some this may also include reducing or avoiding cinnamon, ginger, and cloves
- Consume smaller meals spaced throughout the day
- Reduce intake of caffeine
- Wait 3 hours after eating before laying down

Eat a diet balanced in:

- Whole grains
- Legumes and beans
- Nuts and seeds
- Fruits and vegetables
- Lean protein

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Probiotics

Probiotics may be beneficial for those with lupus. Probiotics are living microorganisms that are eaten or taken in supplement form for possible health benefits. Even though bacteria are usually thought of as harmful “germs,” our bodies need certain bacteria to function properly. For example, there are large amounts of bacteria in our digestive system that help break down food, destroy disease-causing germs, and make important vitamins.

Probiotics can be found in fermented foods and drinks:

- Certain brands of yogurt
- Sauerkraut
- Kefir
- Kombucha

You can also take supplements that contain probiotics. For more specific information on which probiotic supplement to choose, check out the [US Probiotics Guide](#).

When buying a probiotic there are many things to look for, including:

- Brand quality – Look for the NSF and/or the USP seal on products to determine safeness and quality. For more information click [here](#).



- High CFU (Colony Forming Units) Count – Choose a probiotic that has a higher number of probiotics, anywhere from 15 BILLION to 100 BILLION.
- Strain Diversity – Look for a probiotic with at least 10-30 different strains of bacteria. Certain strains may be more helpful for some conditions than others. Using a tool like the [US Probiotics Guide](#) can help you find out which strain is best for you.