Lupus

John Hopkins Lupus Center states that generally, doctors recommend a diet composed of about 50% carbohydrates, 15% protein, and 30% fat. However, since people with lupus often experience symptoms like weight loss or gain, inflammation, osteoporosis, kidney disease, high blood pressure, and atherosclerosis, certain specific nutritional concerns may also need to be taken into consideration. *(John Hopkins Lupus Center)*

In general, follow a healthy, anti-inflammatory diet that includes fruits, vegetables, fish and omega 3 fatty acids while avoiding processed foods, saturated fats and animal fats. With lupus, there are foods that can increase your symptoms. Below is a list from *Dr. Axe* and *John Hopkins Lupus Center* that describe the reasons for avoiding certain foods.

**Make sure you talk to your doctor or dietician before making significant changes to your diet.**

According to *Dr. Axe*, some foods that can contribute to lupus and make autoimmune disease symptoms worse include:

- **Gluten:** Gluten is a type of protein found in wheat, barley, rye and most flour-containing products. Gluten intolerance is common because it’s difficult for many people to digest properly. This can increase leaky gut syndrome, inflammation or trigger a lupus flare-up. *(See Gluten Free Diet above under MS)*
- **Trans fat and sometimes saturated fats:** These fats are found in fast food, many fried foods and packaged/processed foods, and can lead to inflammation and heart problems. Some people with lupus have a hard time metabolizing saturated fats and should limit cheese, red meat, creamy foods and packaged foods.
- **Added sugar:** Too much sugar can overstimulate the immune system and increase pain.
- **High-sodium foods:** Because lupus can damage the kidneys — in fact, lupus nephritis is a type of kidney disease caused by systemic lupus erythematosus — it’s best to try to keep sodium and salt levels low to prevent fluid retention, worsened swelling and electrolyte imbalances.
- **Alcohol and too much caffeine:** These can increase anxiety, worsen inflammation, damage the liver, increase pain, and cause dehydration and sleep-related problems.
- **Certain legumes:** Alfalfa seeds and sprouts, green beans, peanuts, soybeans, and snow peas contain a substance that has been shown to trigger lupus flare-ups in some patients (although not all). Negative reactions in certain patients are believed to be caused by the amino acid L-canavanine. *(Dr. Axe)*

*John Hopkins* also has some insight on supplements and foods to avoid:

- **Garlic:** Scientists believe that three substances in garlic—allicin, ajoene, and thiosulfinates—rev-up your immune system by enhancing the activity of white blood cells, particularly macrophages and lymphocytes. Scientists also believe that the sulfur components of garlic help to prevent and suppress cancer in the body. For this reason, garlic is often used as a supplement to combat colds and infections. Unfortunately, the enhancement of immune response is counterproductive in people with autoimmune disease such as lupus, because their immune system is already overactive. As a result, people with lupus and lupus-like signs should avoid cooking with garlic and adding it to food. Of course, a tiny amount of the herb will not harm you, but try to consciously avoid preparing foods with garlic.
- **Alfalfa Sprouts:** Alfalfa sprouts contain an amino acid called L-canavanine that can increase inflammation in people with lupus by stimulating the immune system. As a result, people with lupus and similar autoimmune conditions should avoid alfalfa sprouts completely.
- **Melatonin and Rozerem (ramelteon):** Melatonin is a hormone secreted by the pineal gland in your brain that regulates other hormones in the body that control how your body reacts to daily patterns of light and dark. Melatonin release is suppressed during the light hours of the day and stimulated by dark, helping you stick to patterns of nighttime sleep and daytime wakefulness. As a result, melatonin is often used as a sleep aid over other medications. Melatonin and melatonin-containing supplements should be avoided in people with lupus and other autoimmune disorders because they may stimulate the immune system. In addition, people with these conditions should also avoid the prescription sleep aid Rozerem (ramelteon), because it mimics melatonin in the body. It is important that you understand the necessity of avoiding both melatonin and Rozerem, since sleep aids are often used to help people with fibromyalgia and other conditions to attain normal sleep patterns.
- **Echinacea:** Echinacea is often used as a dietary supplement to boost the immune system against colds and other illnesses. However, because Echinacea boosts your immune system, it may cause flares in people with autoimmune diseases such as lupus. As a result, people with lupus and other autoimmune diseases should avoid these supplements.
### Diet - Lupus/MS

People with multiple sclerosis may benefit from this diet. A large, population-based study, published in 2012, reported that older adults who followed this diet — rich in fruits and vegetables, fish and grains — showed less damage to the brain’s small vessels, damage that occurs as a normal part of aging and that also can be caused by diseases such as MS.

**Foods to Eat**
- Fruits
- Vegetables
- Grains (mostly whole)
- Beans
- Legumes
- Seeds
- Herbs
- Spices
- Seafood

**Foods to Avoid**
- Certain legumes: Alfalfa seeds and sprouts, green beans, peanuts, soybeans, and snow peas
- Garlic
- Added Sugar
- High Sodium Foods
- Trans Fat and some Saturated fats
- Fried Food
- Fast Food
- Gluten (see MS Diet)

### Diet - Dr. Weil

**Anti-inflammatory**

We all know inflammation on the surface of the body as local redness, heat, swelling and pain. It is the cornerstone of the body's healing response, bringing more nourishment and more immune activity to a site of injury or infection. But when inflammation persists or serves no purpose, it damages the body and causes illness. Stress, lack of exercise, genetic predisposition, and exposure to toxins (like secondhand tobacco smoke) can all contribute to such chronic inflammation, but dietary choices play a big role as well. Learning how specific foods influence the inflammatory process is the best strategy for containing it and reducing long term disease risks. *(Dr. Weil)*

**Food to Eat**
- Spices and herbs, including turmeric, cinnamon, curry, ginger, garlic, and chili
- Organic fruits and vegetables from all parts of the color spectrum, especially berries, tomatoes, orange & yellow fruits, and dark leafy greens.
- Mushrooms.
- Winter squashes, and sweet potatoes
- Cruciferous (cabbage-family) vegetables
- Beans in general and soybeans in particular.
- White, green or oolong tea
- Whole grains such as brown rice and bulgur wheat
- Extra-virgin olive oil as a main cooking oil. Or expeller-pressed, organic canola oil, sunflower and safflower oil
- Avocados and nuts, especially walnuts, cashews, almonds, and nut butters made from these nuts.
- For omega-3 fatty acids, eat salmon, sardines packed in water or olive oil, herring, and black cod.; omega-3 fortified eggs; hemp seeds and flaxseeds

**Food to Avoid**
- Flour and sugar, especially bread and most packaged snack foods (including chips and pretzels).
- High fructose corn syrup.
- Butter, cream, high-fat cheese, un-skinned chicken and fatty meats.
- Products made with palm kernel oil.
- Safflower and sunflower oils, corn oil, cottonseed oil, and mixed vegetable oils.
- Strictly avoid margarine, vegetable shortening, and all products listing them as ingredients.

**Other**
- Cook pasta al dente and eat it in moderation
- Animal protein
- High quality natural cheese and yogurt.
- Plain dark chocolate in moderation (with a minimum cocoa content of 70 percent).
- Alcohol (if you must, try red wine)