

understanding your medications

Lupus

Getting a diagnosis can be overwhelming, especially if you need complicated care. Along with good nutrition, taking your prescribed medication as directed is an important part of a successful treatment plan. The Meijer Specialty Pharmacy care team is here for you every step of the way. **Our pharmacists are available 24/7 to answer questions and to help you get the most out of your medication.**

Lupus is a chronic, autoimmune condition. Autoimmune conditions happen when your immune system mistakenly attacks some of your own cells, causing damage. In lupus, this attack happens throughout your body, commonly affecting the skin, joints, kidneys, heart, lungs and nervous system. All of the medications used to treat lupus work by either targeting the cells that are wrongly attacking your body or by decreasing the inflammation that happens after the attack. Below you will find some helpful facts and tips about the medications you might be taking.

| Medication Name | How Med Is Given | Common Side Effects | Ways To Lessen Side Effects |
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| Benlysta® (belimumab) | Injected into the skin or injected into a vein through an IV infusion | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Diarrhea • Infection • Pain or redness at the injection site • Nausea | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Practice good hygiene: make sure to wash your hands often, and stay away from others who are sick. Make sure to see your doctor right away if you think you might be sick. • Eating small, frequent meals throughout the day can help limit nausea and stomach upset. • If injecting into the skin, make sure to inject yourself in a different spot each time – don't inject into the same area over and over again. |
| Glucocorticoids (Prednisone/ Prednisolone, Methyl-prednisolone) | Taken by mouth or injected into the vein through an IV infusion | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Irritability • Weight gain • High blood sugar • High blood pressure • High cholesterol • Insomnia • Low bone density | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Eating a variety of healthy foods will help you get all of the vitamins and minerals that you need to feel your best. • Try to avoid eating foods that are very sugary or very salty (see how to read a nutrition facts label in the tools and resources). • Include calcium and vitamin D food sources. • Practice good sleep habits. • See our sleep section for more information. |
| Imuran® (azathioprine) | Taken by mouth | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Anemia • Infection • Nausea | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Practice good hygiene: make sure to wash your hands often, and stay away from others who are sick. Make sure to see your doctor right away if you think you might be sick. • Make sure to keep all of your appointments for lab tests – these will check to make sure that the medication isn't causing white blood cell problems. |
| Lupkynis™ (voclosporin) | Taken by mouth | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Anemia • Diarrhea • Headache • High blood pressure | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Eating a variety of healthy foods will help you get all of the vitamins and minerals that you need to feel your best. • Make sure to keep all of your appointments for lab tests - these will check to make sure that the medication isn't causing blood pressure or anemia problems. • Use an over-the-counter (OTC) pain reliever. Make sure to check with your doctor or pharmacist to see which OTC pain reliever is right for you. |
| Plaquenil® (Hydroxychloroquine) | Taken by mouth | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Elevated liver enzymes | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make sure to keep all of your appointments for lab tests – these will check to make sure that the medication isn't causing liver problems. |