# 7 Lupus Flare Triggers to Avoid

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## Common Lupus Flare Triggers to Avoid

Lupus flares are not always predictable and can come on at seemingly the most random of times. However, there are a few things you can do to avoid certain triggers that may end up setting flares in motion.

### 1. Stress

I know everyone says this and it seems super obvious, super vague and above all, super hard to do. Those are all true statements. However, there are things you can do to minimize and manage your stress to ensure your body and mind remain calm.

Whether you work or are a student, make sure you take some time for yourself to unwind. Whether this means painting your toenails, sitting in a bath or curling up with a cup of tea and a good book, make sure you have some serious “me” time a couple of times a week.

This can help take your mind off of your daily stressors and will set your body up to a healing path. Every now and then, when you can afford it, try and treat yourself with a massage or a pedicure or manicure — or whatever will really help you relax. As this is rather expensive, it isn’t wise to make a habit of it, but every once in a while will do you good!

### 2. Poor Sleep

Many of us have terrible sleeping habits, due to stress, lupus, family life or our jobs. While it may not be possible to get an amazing night’s rest every single night, it is always worth a try. Before you go to bed, set aside a few moments to unwind and relax away from the computer and any other electronic devices.

Take the time to either listen to some nature or white noise sounds or even listen to a guided meditation. Try and block off eight to nine (or more if exhaustion is a big symptom for you) hours per night dedicated to sleeping and use those hours to either sleep or relax without any outside influence.

Sleeping well can bolster your immune system and help you avoid a whole host of illnesses that can trigger a lupus flare.

### 3. Eating Badly

Unfortunately there is no magical diet that will cure lupus, the way a lot of fraudsters claim. But this doesn’t mean you should eat badly.

Eating excessive amounts of sugar or fat can contribute to your body feeling sluggish and an overall “sick” feeling, which can lead to lupus flares or activate your symptoms. Personally, I find that lots of protein ups my

energy and this may be helpful to you. Try and eat a balanced diet with a limited amount of sugar, salt and fat and an increased amount of protein.

Additionally, nightshade vegetables (tomato, eggplants and peppers) and alfalfa sprouts are said to increase inflammation and therefore can trigger a lupus flare. Of course, you can have these things in moderation, but eating too many of them may cause an issue.

**4. Colds and Flus**

Depending on your profession, you may be completely unable to stay away from the flu and cold virus during flu and cold season. The flu and cold viruses typically spread because during the winter months, we are all indoors more often and more susceptible to spreading illnesses between us. This means that anywhere you work could potentially turn into a cesspool of germs.

Try to avoid hand contact with those who are ill and avoid putting on lotion at the office, as this can actually spread the virus around. Invest in a good hand sanitizer and use it as much as you feel is necessary.

And always, always get the flu shot every year to ensure that you keep the virus at bay. This is especially important for you and if you are working with vulnerable populations, such as children or the elderly.

*Next page: more common lupus triggers to avoid.*

**5. Excessive Drinking**

This may not cause a flare per se, but it can cause you to feel a lot worse than most people do after they drink. Drinking alcohol isn't really good for anyone, so if you must go out and drink, stick to a glass or two.

Heavy drinking can lead to terrible hangovers that can last for days on end when you have lupus, which is even less fun than a hangover for someone who doesn't have the disease. Don't let peer pressure get to you, either, and stop drinking when you feel you've had enough.

**6. Overdoing It**

This is the one thing I find causes my lupus flares most often. It is incredibly subjective and seems to always change depending on the situation. Do not commit to more than you're be capable of, because it will only end in tears, hurt feelings on both sides and possibly a lupus flare.

Overdoing it can also lead to stress, which can, in turn, exacerbate a flare. Try and keep your commitments to a minimum, unless you are absolutely sure you can handle them. Don't try to do more than you think you can just to impress people — it usually ends up blowing up in someone's face.

Overdoing it can also refer to trying to do too much as once in a single day. This can be something as simple as doing too much housework or exercising more than your body can handle that day. Instead of trying to bite off more than you can chew, try and divvy up what needs to be done and take things day by day, and sometimes hour by hour.

If you have a lot that needs doing, remember to rest in between your tasks, either by napping or simply unwinding with a glass of wine and your favorite TV show for half an hour.

Doing too much is often what leads to my flares, so I have found that I need to pace myself, even if it is annoying to others at times. Remember, you don't have to explain yourself, just listen to what your body is telling you.

**7. The Sun**

You've probably discovered at some point along the way that the sun becomes your nemesis with lupus. Not only is your skin more sensitive to burns (especially if you're on Plaquenil), but the sun can cause lupus flares as well. If you live somewhere where the sun is pretty aggressive, or you go on vacation somewhere tropical, there are several things you can do to avoid getting ill from the sun.

Firstly, it is important that you wear lots of sunscreen and reapply it as necessary. Secondly, wearing long sleeves (even though it can be super uncomfortable) can also help deter the sun — choose light fabrics such as thin cotton to wear to avoid getting too hot. Wearing hats with a brim outside will also protect your face from the rays.

Lupus flares can also come from other sources, such as injuries, surgeries or other traumas to the body like giving birth. Many times, these situations cannot be avoided, but it is important to go easy on yourself and let yourself heal at your own pace.