Do Alternative Treatments for Lupus Really Work?

by ANNA SCANLON

Try These Alternative Treatments for Lupus

Lupus is a disease with no known cure at present. Although there are many people who claim alternative diets or supplements can cure the disease, this is unfortunately not the case.

While diet or alternative therapies may help abate some of the symptoms of lupus, none can cure them. However, there are several alternative treatments for lupus one can use that may help with symptoms and help you cut down on your medication.

It is important to remember that although alternative treatments for lupus may help, they should be used in conjunction with traditional medicine and not to completely replace them.

Going Gluten-Free

While going gluten-free will not cure lupus, for some people it can help dramatically with symptoms. Since everyone's lupus is different, going gluten-free may help some people, while others may find that it makes no difference.

As some people find relief from symptoms, it may be something you would like to experiment with. As the gluten-free movement has gained momentum, there are many, many alternatives to gluten products and most restaurants nowadays offer gluten-free menus.

If you think this may be a major cause of your symptoms, try going gluten-free for a couple of months and see if your symptoms begin to improve.

Acupuncture

Many people with lupus suffer from pain and may also have pain in their muscles. Going to an acupuncture therapist can help relieve some of the pain in your muscles and elsewhere in your body.

While some people may feel anxious about going to see an acupuncturist, it is important to note that the needles are so fine that, when inserted, most people do not feel them. Some people may feel emotional or dizzy during or after a session, but this is nothing to be alarmed by.

Massage

There are many people with lupus who also develop painful knots and trigger points in their body in addition to generalized pain. Seeing a massage therapist regularly can help keep those knots and pressure points at bay as well as keep muscles nice and loose so they don't form again.

Most therapists would recommend a massage a week, though this is unattainable for some. Going as often as possible, or having a doctor prescribe medical massages, are both great ways to ensure you get the treatment you need.

Going Vegan or Raw

Some people claim following a vegan, or even a raw vegan diet (where food is not cooked), can help abate their lupus symptoms. While doctors have not found that this cures lupus, some people report a reduction in pain and their worst symptoms when following a vegan or a raw vegan diet.

If you do follow a vegan diet, it is important that your doctor is aware so that your blood can continue to be monitored regularly to ensure you are getting the nutrients you need.

Chiropractor

A chiropractor can help manipulate your joints back in alignment. While some people dismiss this as a practice that may not be helpful, others find visiting a chiropractor regularly can really help reduce pain and inflammation.

Many find chiropractors can also help diagnose and correct problems with posture, which may cause increased lupus pain.

Supplements

Taking supplements every day can help increase energy and decrease symptoms. While they will not completely nullify the lupus in your body, there are many vitamins and minerals that can be very helpful.

Fish oil, for example, can help lubricate your joints and decrease inflammation. Vitamin A has been found to be a powerful anti-inflammatory and protects the body against toxins and free radicals that can cause cancer.

Vitamin B, specifically Vitamin B12, is a great way to boost energy, something many people with lupus don’t seem to have in excess. Additionally, taking evening primrose oil has been found to help reduce symptoms of lupus and rheumatoid arthritis.

DHEA (short for dehydroepiandrosterone) is a hormone derived from yams that has been proven to help reduce the need for people with lupus to take as many steroids and can be purchased in in many supplements.

However, it is imperative that you speak to your doctor before you begin taking a supplement that contains DHEA. Side effects can include hair loss in men and acne and facial hair growth in women, so it should not be taken lightly.

Herbs

Traditionally, people have used herbs for thousands of years to help treat diseases before modern medication. The scientific evidence that many of these herbs actually treat illnesses is up in the air for many of them, however many people incorporate them into their daily lives and seem to find relief.

Turmeric, an herb found in many foods in Pakistan and India, has been found to help relieve inflammation and arthritis symptoms in laboratory animals, though it has not yet been confirmed in people. However, many lupus sufferers find integrating turmeric into their diet, or rubbing the paste or arthritic joints, can significantly improve symptoms.

Likewise, ginger is thought to have many anti-inflammatory properties and is supposed to help many of the symptoms of lupus.

Relaxation Techniques and Guided Imagery

Participating in guided imagery and relaxation techniques can help keep your mind off of lupus, therefore reducing pain naturally and dramatically. Relaxation techniques may include progressive muscle relaxation, in which you listen to a recorded voice tell you to tense specific muscle groups and then relax them, which will result in helping the muscles release tension.

Guided imagery is when you close your eyes and listen to a person or recorded voice take you on a “journey” where you imagine yourself in serene and relaxing settings. Both types of relaxation techniques are available for free on YouTube and you will likely be able to find a podcast that broadcasts similar relaxation exercises for free.