

# LOOP TO LUPUS

Pop music sensation Selena Gomez recently revealed that she was suffering from a disease called Lupus — and it's been all over the news ever since. But, do you know enough about it? **Pooja Salvi & Katha Nauriyal** help you out

**B**efore we explain what causes lupus and how you can treat it, you should know what the disease is all about. "Lupus is a chronic, autoimmune disease that can damage any part of your body, from your skin and joints to your organs," Dr. Neena Chitnis, a consultant rheumatologist at Weickhardt Hospital explains. Chronic, in simple words, means that the signs and symptoms last longer than six weeks and often even for several years.

"Systemic lupus erythematosus, or SLE, is the most common form of lupus," says Dr. Neena. Systemic lupus is a disease that can affect several parts of your body. Lupus is a disease in which symptoms get worse (flare up) on occasions, but signs also disappear (remission) for periods of time.

## But, what does this mean?

When you're diagnosed with lupus, it means that something is wrong with your immune system. This is the part of your body that fights off viruses, bacteria and germs. Your immune system usually produces proteins called antibodies, which protect your body from foreign invaders. When you have lupus, your immune system cannot tell the difference between these foreign invaders and your body's healthy tissue and creates auto-antibodies that attack and destroy healthy tissue. These auto-antibodies cause



Lupus isn't anything like cancer or HIV/AIDS

## What causes a lupus flare?

When you are affected by lupus, and other autoimmune diseases, your immune system works against the normal cells and tissues in your body. Anything that triggers your immune system can cause a lupus flare. Triggers may include:

- **Ultraviolet light** UV light is a common trigger for a lupus flare,

patients who suffer from lupus, with a difference in dosages," Dr. Neena adds.

## What about chemo?

"Chemotherapy basically included medical drugs that kill certain cell lines in the body. They are usually used to treat cancer when in large doses of these drugs help in killing the cancer cells. Chemotherapy is

## « KNOW MORE HOME REMEDIES TO CURE A STUFFY NOSE

Having a blocked nose can get quite uncomfortable and unfortunately, there is no sure shot way to treat it. **Yamini Walia** suggests a few home remedies that can help you unblock a stuffy nose

**Y**our nose begins to drip, you sound funny and you find it difficult to breathe — all these symptoms make having a stuffy nose extremely annoying. Several people think that having a stuffy nose is the result of the build-up of mucus in your nasal passages, but it is actually caused by inflamed blood vessels in your sinuses. These inflamed blood vessels usually strike after a cold, flu, allergies or a sinus infection. Here, we suggest some home remedies that will help you breathe free.

### A steamy shower

A hot steamy shower is highly effective when you want to unblock a stuffy nose. The steam from the hot shower helps to thin out the mucus in your nose and drains and reduces inflammation. As a result, your breathing returns to normal, at least for a short period.

### Stay hydrated

Drink a lot of water when you have a stuffy nose. Liquids such as water, sports drinks, tea, soup and even juice will keep you hydrated when you're sick. They help thin out the mucus in your nasal passages, which decreases the pressure on your sinuses and pushes the fluids out of your nose. Less pressure means less inflammation and irritation.

### A warm compress

Soak a towel in warm water. Squeeze the water out, fold it and place it over your nose, especially around your nose and on your forehead. The heat can provide comfort, free pain and the warmth will relieve some of the inflammation in your nasal passages.

### Use a humidifier

Humidifiers help break-up congestion by adding moisture to