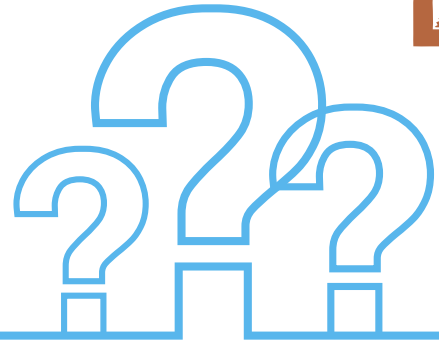




SIMPLIFYING LEPROSY



Frequently Asked Questions



What is leprosy?

Leprosy is a disease caused by a bacteria called 'mycobacterium leprae' that affects the skin and nerves.



What are the signs and symptoms of leprosy?

The most common initial sign is the appearance of pale or reddish patches on the skin with loss of sensation; shiny oily skin with nodules over the ears and enlarged nerves with loss of sensation and/or weakness of the muscles.



How does leprosy spread?

It is an air borne disease. The disease is transmitted through droplets. Prolonged exposure with poor ventilation and hygiene makes the transmission highly conducive. Untreated patients are usually the source of infection to healthy individuals.



Is leprosy contagious?

Leprosy is a very low infectious disease. Most of the population is immune to this disease. BCG vaccine in the early years of life provides significant immunological shield.



How can I prevent my family getting leprosy if I have leprosy?

If you are on treatment, you cannot spread infection causing leprosy to your family members. However, every person in your household or in very close contact with you at work or socially must be examined, and they can receive recommended treatment that will protect them from getting leprosy.



Is leprosy hereditary?

It is not a hereditary disease. The disease does not pass down from the parent to the child.



Can leprosy be prevented?

Yes, it can be prevented by early diagnosis and all persons with suggestive signs of leprosy are encouraged to seek medical consultation. Examining household contact and contacts in the neighbour and social circle of the person is an integral part of the NLEP program.



How is leprosy diagnosed?

The diagnosis of leprosy must be confirmed by a doctor or a trained healthcare worker (such as a para-medical worker or a non-medical supervisor) at your nearest primary healthcare facility, block level hospital, and district hospital. Please contact your nearest primary healthcare centre or seek assistance from your ASHA.



Is there a cure?

Yes, leprosy is completely curable! A combination of drugs called multidrug therapy (MDT) is provided free of cost at your nearest primary healthcare centre and needs to be taken for 6 –12 months. Hence, without delay please contact the medical officer at the primary healthcare centre.



Is the treatment expensive?

The treatment is free of cost at any nearest Government primary healthcare facility, block level public hospitals, and district hospitals. The government ensures that every individual undergoing treatment is fully taken care of. The doctor consultation, provision of MDT, physiotherapy, microcellular rubber footwear (MCR), and reconstructive surgery are all covered under the National Leprosy Eradication Program by the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare.



Can an individual have physical intimacy while being affected or undergoing treatment?

Yes. Neither the disease nor the treatment affects one's sexual and marital life.



Can I continue with my pregnancy if diagnosed with leprosy?

Yes! Under the supervision and guidance of a doctor at your nearest healthcare facility, you can have a healthy baby.



Can an expecting mother take MDT?

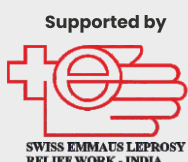
Yes! MDT does not affect a woman's pregnancy in any form or manner. It is safe and does not harm the baby.



Is it okay to be part of social gatherings?

Yes! Leprosy is just another condition and not to be feared. Being in a social circle: having meals together, holding hands, sharing a warm embrace, dancing, and all forms of social interactions are possible for a person who is undergoing treatment or who has completed treatment.

The most important need of a person affected by leprosy is extending them emotional and mental support: to be accepted at home, in the workplace, and in the society. If a person is disabled due to leprosy, s/he should be empowered to live a regular and productive life. Having compassion and empathy is vital in developing an ecosystem supportive of demystifying stigma and uprooting leprosy at its bud.



Supported by

For more information, visit:

https://dghs.gov.in/content/1329_1_leprosy.aspx

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