



WORLD LEPROSY DAY

26TH JANUARY

*Breaking Myths,
Spreading Awareness:
Understanding &
Combating Leprosy*

Every year, the last Sunday of January is dedicated to raising awareness about a disease that has often been shrouded in stigma and misunderstanding -leprosy.



WHAT IS LEPROSY?

Leprosy, also known as Hansen's disease, is caused by the bacterium *Mycobacterium leprae*. This slow-growing organism primarily affects the skin, nerves, and mucous membranes. Leprosy is a neglected tropical disease (NTD) which still occurs in more than 120 countries, with more than 200 000 new cases reported every year.



KEY FACTS

- **Chronic Infectious Disease:** Slow-growing, affects over 200,000 people annually.
- **Curable:** Treated with multidrug therapy (MDT).
- **Global Presence:** Found in over 120 countries, most cases in South-East Asia.
- **Transmission:** Spread through respiratory droplets, requires prolonged, close contact with untreated cases.



SYMPTOMS & DIAGNOSIS

EARLY SIGNS

- Discolored skin patches with numbness or reduced sensation.
- Muscle weakness and nerve damage.

DIAGNOSTIC CRITERIA:

- Loss of sensation in skin patches.
- Enlarged peripheral nerve with loss of sensation or weakness.
- Detection of bacilli in skin smear.

TYPES OF CASES:

- Paucibacillary (PB): 1–5 lesions, no bacilli.
- Multibacillary (MB): >5 lesions or nerve involvement.

MYTHS VS. FACTS

Myth: Leprosy is highly contagious.

Fact: Requires prolonged close contact;
95% of people are naturally immune.

Myth: Affects only people in developing countries.

Fact: Found globally, with high cases in India, Brazil, and Indonesia.

Myth: Caused by poor hygiene.

Fact: Transmitted via bacteria, not hygiene.

Myth: A punishment from God.

Fact: Caused by bacterial infection, not divine retribution.



TREATMENT & PREVENTION

TREATMENT:

- Multidrug therapy (MDT):
 - PB Cases: 6 months.
 - MB Cases: 12 months.
- Drugs: Dapsone, Rifampicin, Clofazimine.

VACCINATION:

- BCG Vaccine: Offers ~50% protection.
- Second dose enhances protection.

PREVENTION:

- Early diagnosis and treatment prevent complications.
- Education dispels myths and encourages prompt medical advice.



Leprosy is curable, and together, we can break the chains of misunderstanding. Early diagnosis saves lives.

Let's stand united for a world free from leprosy!

Spread Awareness, End Stigma!

