

# Leprosy<sup>1</sup>

Now that you've been diagnosed with leprosy, what should you know?



This booklet contains the most essential information about leprosy, as we believe that everybody deserves to have access to clear information and good health care.

<sup>1</sup>The term leprosy is used in this material as it remains the most widely adopted medical terminology in international clinical protocols and scientific literature. However, the term has a long history of stigma. For this reason, many health organizations and social movements advocate the use of Hansen's disease, emphasizing its medical, treatable, and curable nature as part of a broader human rights approach.



## How did I get infected?



The bacteria that cause leprosy are mainly transmitted through **droplets from the respiratory tract of someone who has leprosy but is not yet receiving treatment.**

That is why your close contacts need to be examined, so that if they show signs or symptoms of the disease, they can begin treatment promptly and avoid infecting others.

It is important to be aware of the **signs and symptoms** such as painful nerves, tingling, loss or altered sensation, discolored patches and nodules.



## Do I need to change my daily life?

**No!** If you are feeling well, **you can and should continue your normal activities.**

It is not necessary to isolate yourself from your family and friends, and you do not have to separate any household items, such as utensils, clothing etc., or stop hugging, kissing and having sexual intercourse, since the disease is not transmitted that way.

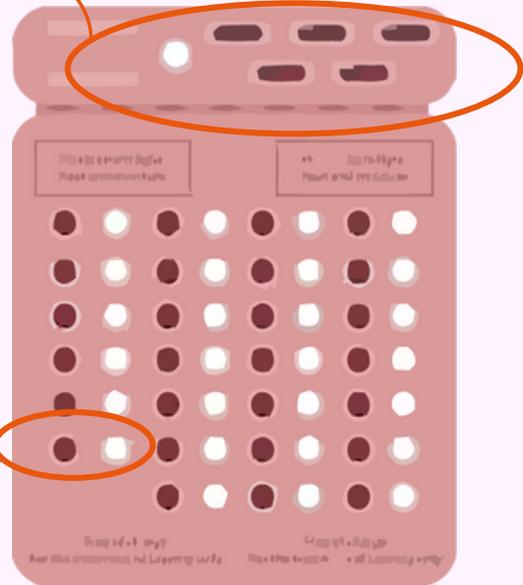
**This guide helps you understand how the treatment works**

It is important to follow the prescription given by the medical professional who is treating you.

**Every month** you will receive a 28 day supply of medication in a blister pack.

Your first dose will be taken under supervision of a healthcare professional, who will also assess your response to treatment and ask you about any complaints you may have.

For the rest of the month you will take your **daily dose of medication at home.**



Leprosy is **curable**. The treatment consists of a combination of antibiotics that are effective against the bacteria that causes leprosy.

**The treatment is safe!**

Treatment duration may be six or twelve blister packs depending on the type of leprosy you have.

## Will I experience any side effects?

The medication may cause side effects. They are usually mild but it is important to stay attentive to any signs or symptoms and seek medical help if needed.

### Common side effects are:



Change of skin color



Red/Orange bodily fluids



Purple nails



Dry skin

**Less common side effects**, but important to report to your health care provider are:



Anemia with extreme tiredness



Vomiting and nausea

### Here are some tips to support your well-being during and after treatment!

- Use creams, lotions and oils to moisturize your skin and gently massage your hands and feet.
- Avoid exposing your skin to the sun without protection; use sunblock or cover your skin with clothing.
- If you are concerned about any side effects, seek medical attention promptly.
- In case of any functional limitations, seek medical care and a support group.

Be alert if you experience loss of sensation as you may not notice cuts and burns on your hands and feet.

Protect areas with reduced sensation and avoid new injuries.

# Leprosy reactions

Before, during or after<sup>2</sup> taking the treatment you may experience symptoms known as leprosy reactions.

These occur as your body tries to fight the bacteria causing leprosy which can lead to an inflammatory response, new lesions and pain.

**It is not due to the leprosy medication.**

**Common signs and symptoms of reactions are:**



**If you notice any of these symptoms, seek medical care immediately to avoid permanent complications.**

<sup>2</sup>after treatment can be up to several years after completing MDT.



**Can I get infected again after completing my treatment?**



Yes, you can be reinfected by someone else who has leprosy but has **not yet started treatment**. That's why it is important to have your closest contacts, such as household and social contacts, screened and encouraged to check themselves regularly.



**You are not alone!**

**Surround yourself with people.**

**Look for a self-care group or social movement!**

You don't have to stop working because of leprosy!

You can continue participating in social events and spending time with your loved ones.

Leprosy is a disease that can be treated. Once treatment begins, the bacteria that causes the disease is no longer transmitted,

It is important to be well-informed.  
Seek help if you are worried, sad or anxious.

## Elaboration



## Collaboration



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