

# LEPROSY

**Best way to deal with/ prevent leprosy:  
Detect early and treat with Multi drug therapy (MDT)**



## MDT:

- ✓ **Kills bacteria**
- ✓ **Stops spread of the disease**
- ✓ **Cures leprosy**
- ✓ **Prevents deformity**

## Let Us Talk:



- ❖ Look at the picture: Note the disfigurement!
- ? What is the cause of this disfigurement?
  - ✓ They are suffering from leprosy.

? Does this kind of disfigurement occur in all the people suffering from leprosy?

✓ **No**, it usually occurs, if

- ◆ **No treatment** is taken
- ◆ Treatment is taken **late**
- ◆ Treatment is **irregular**
- ◆ Treatment taken is **incomplete**
- ◆ **Advice** is not sought in time or not followed

? Is leprosy curable?

✓ **Yes**, Leprosy is curable if detected early and treated with MDT.

? How can we help a leprosy affected person & prevent spread of leprosy?

- ✓ Give **correct information** about Leprosy.
- ✓ **Identify** leprosy affected person and **refer** to nearest health centre for treatment
- ✓ Encourage leprosy patients to take **regular** and **complete treatment**.

Deformity & Disability in leprosy can be prevented by:

- ❖ **Early Diagnosis**
- ❖ **Regular treatment**
- ❖ **Complete treatment**

## What is Leprosy?

- Leprosy is caused by Bacteria (germs).
- Affects skin, Mucosa (inner lining of organs) and nerves
- It can affect any one, all age, both sex
- If not treated in time, it can spread from person to person
- Leprosy affected person can lead completely normal life
- Disability associated with leprosy can be prevented by early detection and treatment of leprosy with MDT.

Best way to prevent spread of  
leprosy!  
Detect leprosy and treat all with  
MDT

## How can we help leprosy affected persons? (Job Responsibilities of ASHA)



Spread correct information  
About  
Leprosy

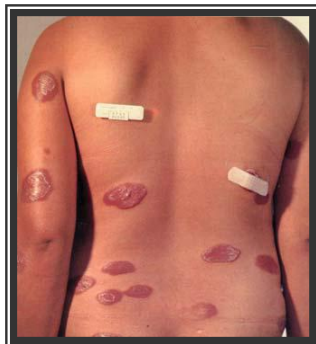
- ✓ Generate awareness to reduce stigma & encourage self reporting
- ✓ Identify a leprosy affected person / its complications
- ✓ Ask him to go to nearest Health centre
- ✓ Make sure that patient takes regular treatment
- ✓ Encourage patient to complete the treatment
- ✓ Encourage patient to practice self care (as advised by doctor / Health worker) to prevent deformity

## How to identify leprosy affected person:

If a person presents with one or more of the following symptom &/or sign; you may suspect that person is suffering from leprosy and refer the person for confirmation of the diagnosis to the doctor at nearest health centre. Take care **not** to label him / her to be suffering from leprosy because disease carries stigma and individual must be told that condition is curable and must contact the doctor of the nearest health center and complete the treatment as advised by the doctor.

Leprosy affected person may have the following:

### I. Skin patch with loss of sensation (Heat touch & pain):



- ✓ Pale, reddish or copper colored
- ✓ Small / Large      ✓ One, few or many
- ✓ Flat or raised      ✓ Can appear anywhere

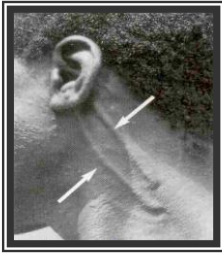
### But



- ✗ Not white, dark red or Black in colour
- ✗ Not scaly      ✗ Not present since birth
- ✗ Does not itch      ✗ Usually do not hurt
- ✗ Do not appear or disappear suddenly



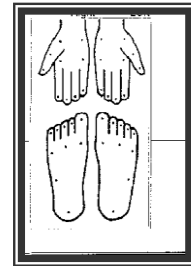
## II. Involvement of peripheral Nerves:



**Tender thickened nerves:** (cord like)  
esp. behind the ear, in fore arm and legs



**Loss of sensation:** (touch, pain, temperature) esp. in tips of fingers and sole of the foot



### **Weakness/ inability to perform certain movements:**

Like, inability to touch tip of fingers with tip of thumb,  
Move hand backward on wrist (Wrist Drop),  
Move foot upwards on ankle (foot drop) or  
Close eyes completely may be due to leprosy.

## III. Infiltration/ thickening of skin:



Reddish or skin coloured nodules or smooth shiny  
diffuse thickening of skin without loss of sensation

Swelling or lump in face or ear lobes



**IV. Deformities and Disabilities:** Usually, the following deformities/ disabilities may be found in leprosy cases.



**Claw hands or claw feet**



**Drop foot:** Inability to move foot upwards on ankle joint & inability to retain chappal in the foot & walk with high stepping gait



**Drop wrist:** Inability to move hand backward on wrist joint



**Inability to close eyes completely**

**V. Repeated injury/ burn marks:**

Repeated painless ulcers in soles and palms may be due to leprosy.



**VI. Leprosy Reactions:** A person with leprosy can have a reaction at almost any time - before treatment, at diagnosis, during treatment and after completion of treatment.

There are two Types of Lepra reactions.



(a) Existing lesions become red, swollen and hot and painful on touch. (**Type-I reaction**)



(b) Occurrence of painful red nodules on face, arms and legs with fever, body ache, loss of appetite etc. (**Type-II reaction**)

Following Need Immediate Referral:

- Leprosy Reactions
- Sudden occurrence of weakness / paralysis of muscles and inability to use limbs as described
- Painful peripheral nerves with difficulty in movement of joints
- Red eyes
- Swollen fingers/toes

When you suspect leprosy:  
Refer person to the doctor at nearest health centre for  
confirmation of Diagnosis and starting treatment

## Monitoring Regularity and Completion of Treatment:

MDT is the treatment of choice for leprosy.  
Four types of standard regime are available for treatment.

It is very important to encourage leprosy affected persons to take the medicine regularly and complete the course of MDT.

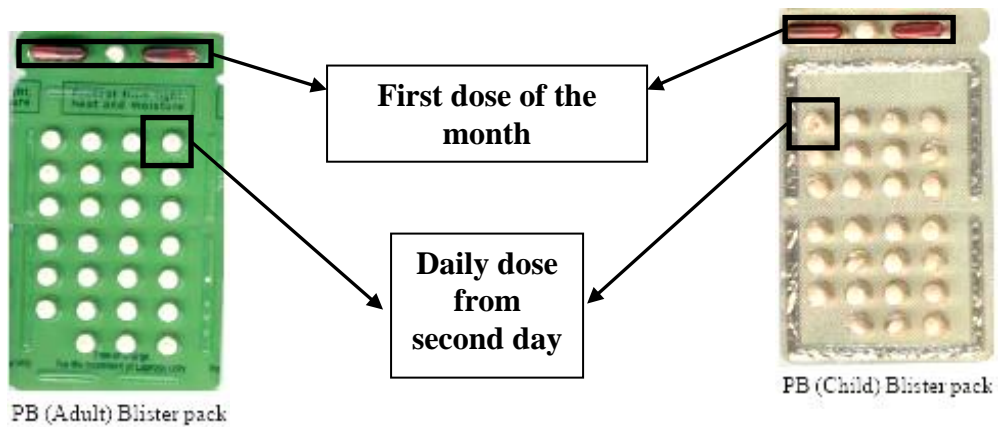
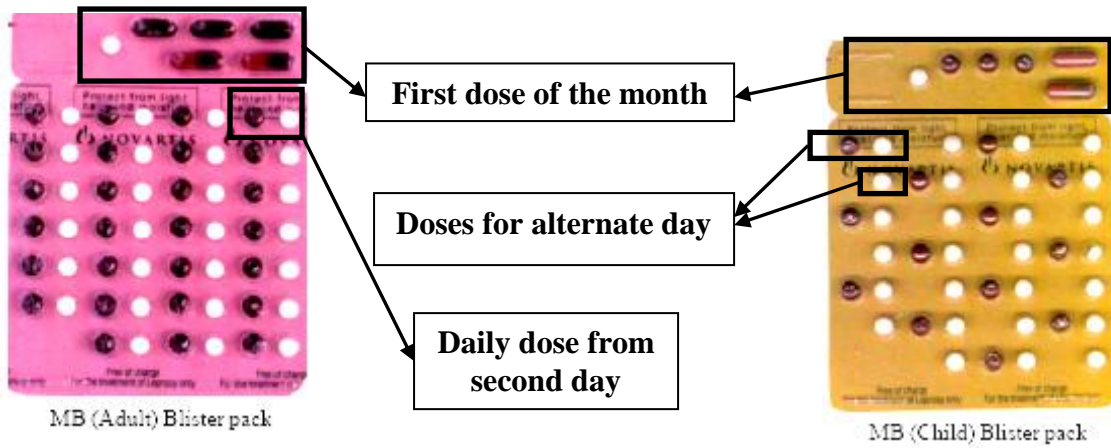
Once person is diagnosed as suffering from leprosy by the Doctor  
Find the type of leprosy and duration of treatment.

Type of Leprosy/ Duration of treatment	Type of Regime	Characteristics
<b>PB</b> (Pauci-bacillary) Six pulses in 6-9 consecutive months	PB (Adult)	Less severe type 1-5 Skin patches &/or Involvement of One nerve
	PB (Child)	
<b>MB</b> (Multibacillary) Twelve pulses in 12- 18 consecutive months	MB (Adult)	More severe type 6 or more Skin patches &/or Involvement of Two or more nerves
	MB (Child)	

- ❖ Visit the home of leprosy affected person every month, while on MDT
- ❖ Make sure that the leprosy affected person is collecting the medicine regularly i.e. every month, one or two days before completion of earlier pack
- ❖ If patient is not collecting medicine every month , find out the reason, tell the person benefits of taking regular treatment, discuss the problem with the doctor
- ❖ Also make sure that patient is taking medicine daily
  - Find out when was the drug collected – say seven days back
  - How many tablets were present in previous months strip – say two tablets
  - Find out how many tablets have been taken from this months pack – say 5 tablets.

This shows that that patient is taking medicine daily because  
 $2 \text{ tablets of previous month} + 5 \text{ tablets from this months pack} = 7$  (medicine was collected seven days back)

On completion of the treatment children of the family should be examined for leprosy as children are more vulnerable.



MDT is

- ❖ Safe
- ❖ Even safe during pregnancy
- ❖ Effective
- ❖ Easy to take

Keep MDT in

- ❖ Dry,
- ❖ Safe and
- ❖ Cool place
- ❖ And out of the reach of children.

## Generate awareness for leprosy:

It is very important to spread correct information about leprosy, encourage leprosy affected persons to take the medicine regularly and complete the course of MDT. You may also help him in preventing complication due to leprosy. You are the main person to disseminate correct information about leprosy to person affected with leprosy and to the community in which you live and work. You must visit the leprosy affected person, their family members and invite community members to a meeting and tell them:

<p><b><u>Curability:</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>❖ Leprosy is a disease like any other infectious diseases caused by bacteria.</li><li>❖ It is fully curable</li><li>❖ MDT is the drug of choice and available at all health sub-center and PHC,</li><li>❖ MDT is available free of cost.</li><li>❖ Incomplete and inadequate Treatment will not cure leprosy.</li><li>❖ Full course of MDT must be taken to prevent relapse and deformity</li></ul>	<p><b><u>Early signs:</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>❖ Suspected cases should be taken to nearest PHC for confirmation of disease and starting treatment</li></ul>
<p><b><u>No need to fear:</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>❖ While taking treatment leprosy affected person can be kept at home and lead a normal life i.e. go to school, work, play, get married , have children..</li><li>❖ If MDT is not taken properly patient may spread infection to others especially to children in the family.</li><li>❖ MDT is available free from nearby health center and very safe to use and effective.</li><li>❖ Treated patient are non-infectious</li><li>❖ MDT is safe during pregnancy</li></ul>	<p><b><u>Support:</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>❖ Affected people need support and encouragement of their family and community so that they are able to take the treatment regularly and are able to lead a normal life</li></ul>

Dispel fear of leprosy:  
Spread correct information

## Prevention of Disability and Medical Rehabilitation:

A leprosy affected person may develop deformities or disabilities if leprosy is not treated, treatment is started late, treatment is taken irregularly, treatment is not completed or insensitive parts are not protected. Common disabilities affecting routine daily activities in leprosy are:

- **Incomplete closure of eye lid:** It results in exposure of cornea and ulceration which may lead to dimness of vision or complete loss of vision.
- **Loss of sensation in hands and feet:** Loss of sensation is also accompanied with loss of sweating leading to dryness of the skin predisposing it for development of cracks, ulcerations and repeated injury
- **Weakness and deformity of Hands and feet:** Weakness of the muscles disturbs the balance of muscles at the joint and development of contractures and fixed deformity of the joints if not cared properly. Due to paralysis of muscles person may develop drop wrist and drop foot.

These deformities and disabilities can be prevented by practicing self care and already existing disabilities can be corrected and affected part can be made functional by reconstructive surgery. Facilities for Reconstructive surgery are available at many centres. Doctor at the health centre can help the leprosy disabled person to under go surgery.

### For Prevention of Deformity and Disability:

- ❖ Identify Leprosy in early stages
- ❖ Start treatment with MDT
- ❖ Ensure regular and complete treatment

### To prevent worsening of already existing deformity:

- ❖ All as above &
- ❖ Ensure practice of self care as advised by treating Physicians

### Correction of already existing deformity:

- ❖ Most of the deformities are correctable to make affected part functional
- ❖ Correctable by Reconstructive Surgery
- ❖ Doctor at the nearest health centre can help the leprosy disabled person