



Demystifying a highly
misunderstood disease

LEPROSY

9

COMMON LEPROSY
MYTHS BUSTED



**BUST THE
MYTHS**

**LEARN THE
FACTS**

ABOUT LEPROSY

"Leprosy is the result of a curse." "Leprosy cannot be cured." How many of us have grown up hearing this?

But the unfortunate part is, we tend to believe in such myths about leprosy and these myths add to the stigma associated with leprosy.

The stigma of leprosy has serious consequences on both patients and their family members. Because of stigma, patients do not come early for treatment resulting in disabilities and transmission of the disease. Stigma also affects various aspects of life, such as social status, employment opportunities or jobs, marriage and family life.

For this reason, clearing up the myths and misconceptions about leprosy is crucial in our fight against leprosy.

Here, we bring you a small primer on some of the basic facts about leprosy in our effort to dispel the myths associated with leprosy.



BUST THE MYTH LEARN THE FACT

MYTH: Leprosy is a disease of the past, completely eradicated.

FACT: Leprosy is not eradicated so far. Even today, leprosy is a public health problem with over 200,000 cases detected in 150 countries.

A group of women in colorful saris are standing outdoors, smiling and interacting. The image is overlaid with text.

BUST THE MYTH LEARN THE FACT

MYTH: Leprosy is the result of a sin or curse, or immoral behaviour.

FACT: Leprosy is caused by a slow-growing bacterium, *Mycobacterium leprae*, and is not the result of a sin or curse, or immoral behaviour.

BUST THE MYTH LEARN THE FACT

A background image showing two women in a field of tall grass. One woman is wearing a blue and white patterned sari and a red headscarf, smiling. The other woman is wearing a purple and red patterned sari and a red headscarf, looking down. The image is slightly blurred and has a dark overlay.

MYTH: Leprosy is hereditary.

FACT: Leprosy is not hereditary. There is no medical evidence to show that leprosy is transmitted congenitally to the offspring of an infected mother.



BUST THE MYTH LEARN THE FACT

MYTH: Leprosy is very contagious (easy to catch).

FACT: Leprosy is one of the least contagious diseases. In fact, 95% of adults cannot catch it because their immune system can fight off the bacteria that cause leprosy.

A photograph of a family of three sitting outdoors against a brick wall. A woman is on the left, holding a young child. A man is on the right, looking down at his hands. The child is wearing a pink and yellow striped sweater. The text is overlaid on the image.

BUST THE MYTH LEARN THE FACT

MYTH: Leprosy is not curable.

FACT: Leprosy is completely curable with multidrug therapy (MDT), a combination of three antibiotics – rifampicin, clofazimine and dapsone. Treatment period ranges from 6 to 12 months.

A group of diverse children, including a girl in the foreground holding a red sign that says "I RESPECT people with leprosy by CALLING it leprosy", are holding small circular signs. The background is a dark, textured surface.

BUST THE MYTH LEARN THE FACT

MYTH: You can get leprosy when sitting next to someone who has the disease.

FACT: You cannot get leprosy through casual contact, like shaking hands or playing together or sitting next to someone who has the disease.

A group of smiling children, likely of South Asian descent, are visible in the background. They are looking towards the camera with joyful expressions. The image is slightly blurred and has a dark overlay to make the text stand out.

BUST THE MYTH LEARN THE FACT

MYTH: Leprosy causes the fingers and toes to fall off.

FACT: Fingers and toes do not 'fall off' due to leprosy. In advanced stages, the bacteria that cause leprosy attacks the nerves of the fingers and toes and causes them to become numb. Injuries and infection of numb areas can cause the bones to shorten. The tissues around them shrink, making them short.

A photograph of a man and a woman sitting together, smiling and holding a baby. The man is on the left, wearing a grey jacket, and the woman is on the right, wearing a green jacket. They are both looking at the baby. In the foreground, a smartphone is visible, displaying a colorful screen. The background is slightly blurred, showing some household items.

BUST THE MYTH LEARN THE FACT

MYTH: Patients with leprosy need to be isolated.

FACT: Patients with leprosy, taking multidrug therapy (MDT) do not spread the disease. A patient becomes non-infectious within one week, most often, after the very first dose of treatment.

A photograph of a family of four sitting on a bed in a simple room. A man in a purple shirt is on the left, holding a baby in a striped hat. A woman in a blue headscarf and pink shirt is in the center, smiling. A young child in a striped shirt is on the right. The room has a brick wall and a small picture of a house on the wall.

BUST THE MYTH LEARN THE FACT

MYTH: Persons affected by leprosy cannot lead a normal life.

FACT: Persons affected by leprosy can lead normal and dignified lives like any other person. They can marry, have children, continue to attend work or school.

A photograph of a man and a woman sitting together, smiling and holding a baby. The man is on the left, wearing a grey jacket, and the woman is on the right, wearing a green shirt. The baby is in the center, wearing a yellow and white outfit. A smartphone is visible in the bottom left corner, displaying a colorful interface. The background is slightly blurred, showing some household items.

#BeatLeprosyMyths

**Spread the word
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**The Leprosy Mission
Trust India**

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