

January 31 | World leprosy day

## Leprosy is among the oldest diseases in the world. What do you know about it?

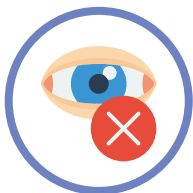
DO YOU KNOW WHAT LEPROSY IS? ALTHOUGH THERE HAVE BEEN RECORDS OF IT FOR OVER 4 THOUSAND YEARS, IN PLACES LIKE CHINA, EGYPT AND INDIA, NOT EVERYONE KNOWS EXACTLY HOW THIS DISEASE WORKS.

Known as leprosy or Hansen's disease, it is an infectious disease caused by a bacterium called *Mycobacterium leprae* or Hansen's bacillus.

Although it is still considered a public health problem today, there is much to learn about the disease. Have a look:



- Leprosy is a skin disease, however it is transmitted by droplets of saliva or nose secretions.



- The incubation period of the disease can last from six months to five years, depending on the person's genetics and immunity.
- The disease is curable, but if not treated properly, it can leave sequelae like blindness, disability of the limbs, wounds, etc.



### Signs of leprosy

- Light, red, or dark spots that are barely visible at first.
- Change in sensitivity associated with body hair loss and absence of sweating.
- Numbness, loss of muscle tone and retraction of the fingers.
- Development of physical disabilities.
- Swelling or lumps in areas such as ears, hands, elbows, and feet



Unlike the past, nowadays the patient who undergoes the necessary treatment no longer needs to isolate himself, as he stops being contagious as soon as he receives the first doses of medicine.



### What is the treatment like?

It is free and offered by the Unified Health System. It can last up to 12 months and requires that the patient take daily oral medication.

If you are showing one or more of these symptoms or know someone who is, seek or encourage the search for a doctor.  
**IT IS POSSIBLE TO GET RID OF THE DISEASE AS WELL AS ITS STIGMA. DO YOUR PART!**