



Leprosy screening and preventative treatment

Leprosy is an infection which can be spread between people who have close contact over many months. It mostly affects the skin and nerves, and sometimes the eyes.

Screening for leprosy is offered to people who have been in contact with someone with leprosy or live in a community where there have been cases of leprosy in the past.

Why is screening for leprosy important?

Screening is done to:

- detect the infection early before any damage to the body occurs
- offer a single dose of antibiotic to help prevent infection

The infection can take a long time to show changes in the body, so screening should be repeated over several years.

What happens during screening?

- Skin check
- Testing of nerves to look for thickening, checking feeling and movement in hands and feet
- You may be offered tests including nose and mouth swab, skin sample or blood test.

What is leprosy preventative treatment?

A single dose of medicine called Rifapentine can help to prevent leprosy. Rifapentine is an antibiotic.

Are there any side effects?

The medicine does not usually cause any serious side effects. You may notice your urine and tears look reddish-orange for a day or so. Some people feel tired and uncomfortable in the stomach for a short time. If you become unwell, contact your doctor or nurse.



The information provided is for information purposes only. If you are a patient using this publication, you should seek assistance from a healthcare professional when interpreting these materials and applying them to your individual circumstances.



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