

## **PATIENT INFORMATION**

**The National Hansen's Disease Programs (NHDP) provides, free of charge:**

- **Antibiotics for Hansen's disease**
- **Pathology diagnostic services**
- **Physician visits at NHDP and clinics in 15 cities and Puerto Rico**

**For details, please contact the NHDP:**

**Phone 1-800-642-2477, weekdays 9 am to 5:30 pm ET**  
(Hawaii: 1-808-733-9831).

**Website:** [www.hrsa.gov/hansens-disease](http://www.hrsa.gov/hansens-disease)

Individuals living in the continental United States, Puerto Rico or the U.S. Territories may receive medical care for the diagnosis and treatment of Hansen's disease (leprosy)-related conditions at one of the 16 Federally-supported outpatient clinics in 10 States and Puerto Rico.

<http://www.hrsa.gov/hansens-disease/ambulatory-clinics.html>

Hansen's disease medications can be provided to patients living in an area not served by an HD clinic through the National Hansen's Disease Program (NHDP). A private physician can order the HD medications (dapson, rifampin, clofazamine) from the NHDP at no charge to the patient. The NHDP also provides consultant and biopsy processing services to the physician at no cost to the patient. Office visit and laboratory charges are not covered by the NHDP.

### **Common Questions:**

***Q: What Is Hansen's Disease (HD)?***

**A:** An infection of the skin and nerves, caused by bacteria. It used to be called "leprosy".

***Q: How Do I Know If I Have It?***

**A:** Pale or slightly red areas on the skin which have lost feeling. Loss of feeling in the hands or feet may be the first signs of HD. Your doctor can make the diagnosis by doing a test called a biopsy. Have your doctor contact the NHDP (see contact information above).

***Q: How Is It Treated?***

**A:** This disease is treated and cured with medicine. Patients on medicine for HD do not spread the disease. The antibiotics are provided free of charge by the NHDP.

***Q: Can Anyone Get This Disease?***

**A:** Ninety five percent of people have natural protection against the bacteria that cause HD. For unknown reasons, there are a few people who have little or no protection, so they can get the disease from close contact to an untreated person.

***Q: Is HD Very Infectious?***

**A:** It is difficult to get HD. It does not spread like measles or chicken pox. In most cases, there may be only one person in a family who develops this disease.

***Q: Is It Passed On During Pregnancy Or Through Sex?***

**A:** HD is not passed on from a mother to her unborn baby. You also do not get it through sexual contact.

***Q: What Effects Does It Have On The Body?***

**A:** Because the bacteria like the cooler parts of the body, the skin and nerves are affected. This can cause dryness and stiffness of the skin, pain, loss of feeling, and weakness in the muscles of the hands or feet.

***Q: Will My Fingers Or Toes Fall Off?***

**A:** No. Problems with fingers or toes can be prevented by avoiding injury and infections to these areas, and by taking the HD medicines.

***Q: Can I Continue To Work?***

**A:** A person with HD can continue to work and lead an active life.

***Q: Where Is Treatment Available?***

**A:** Medicine for HD can be provided at no cost to patients by their family doctor or through the Hansen's disease clinic closest to them.