

Leprosy

The fight against leprosy is one of the greatest public health successes in history. Yet, still today, 2 to 3 million people are living with physical disability and stigma as a result of the disease.



For more than 30 years, Novartis has been working with partners around the world to eliminate leprosy. Multidrug therapy (MDT) has been a major breakthrough in the treatment of leprosy and its free availability has reduced the global disease burden by 95% in the past three decades.

Since 2000, Novartis has donated more than 70 million blister packs of multidrug therapy (MDT) valued at approximately USD 124 million through the World Health Organization (WHO), helping to treat more than 7.5 million leprosy patients worldwide. Further, the donation has made it possible to interrupt the transmission of leprosy and prevent disabilities.



Going the last mile to eliminate leprosy

Since 2000, Novartis has been donating MDT through the WHO. In 2021, we renewed our pledge to extend our donation with the WHO through a [new five-year agreement](#).

In 2019, the [Novartis Foundation](#) announced a strategic alliance with Microsoft and the [Oswaldo Cruz Foundation](#) to explore the development of an AI-enabled accelerator of leprosy screening/diagnosis that analyzes images of skin lesions.

Interrupting transmission is key to disease elimination

Launched in 2014, the [Leprosy Post-Exposure Prophylaxis \(LPEP\)](#)¹ program has tested the real-world effectiveness of providing preventative treatment to close contacts of newly diagnosed leprosy patients. The evidence generated by LPEP in the seven countries where the program is operational led to the inclusion of this strategy in the [WHO Guidelines for the Diagnosis, Treatment and Prevention of Leprosy](#) in 2018. Results from the program, which covered more than 150 000 people across seven countries, showed that large-scale implementation of this strategy could accelerate leprosy elimination.

[Read More](#)

Partnering to eliminate leprosy

- [World Health Organization \(WHO\)](#)
- [Global Partnership for Zero Leprosy \(GPZL\)](#)
- [International Federation of Anti-Leprosy Associations \(ILEP\)](#)
- [American Leprosy Missions](#)
- [FAIRMED](#)
- [German Leprosy and TB Relief Association](#)
- [NLR – until No Leprosy Remains](#)

Novartis Global Health & Sustainability

Novartis Global Health & Sustainability aims to transform health in lower income populations through applying expertise, people and full organizational capability to address major, unresolved global health challenges. Leprosy is part of the Novartis Global Health & Sustainability Unit. For more than 30 years, Novartis has been working with partners around the world on innovative approaches to leprosy elimination. According to the World Health Organization, Novartis Multidrug therapy donations have helped to treat more than 7.5 million leprosy patients since 2000.

[Learn more](#)

References:

1. Richardus JH et al. Leprosy post-exposure prophylaxis with single-dose rifampicin (LPEP): an international feasibility programme. *Lancet Global Health*, published online on 29 October 2020. Available at: [http://www.thelancet.com/journals/langlo/article/PIIS2214-109X\(20\)30396-X/fulltext](http://www.thelancet.com/journals/langlo/article/PIIS2214-109X(20)30396-X/fulltext)

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4. <https://www.novartisfoundation.org/news/novartis-foundation-and-microsoft-partner-develop-ai-enabled-digital-health-tool-early-leprosy-detection>
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6. <https://apps.who.int/iris/handle/10665/274127>
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