

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 four decades.

Since 2000, Novartis has donated more than 77 million blister packs of multidrug therapy (MDT) valued at approximately USD 152 million through the World Health Organization (WHO), helping to treat more than 8.3 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 2026, we renewed our pledge to extend our donation with the WHO through a [new five-year agreement](#), and [announced to collaborate with the TB Alliance](#) a non-profit drug developer specializing in mycobacterial diseases, to provide scientific and strategic advice on the development of a potential next generation treatment for leprosy. This could represent the first innovation in leprosy since the introduction of multidrug therapy more than 40 years ago.

Interrupting transmission is key to disease elimination

Over the last forty years, the global prevalence of leprosy has decreased by more than 95%; however, we have now reached a plateau in progress. Among the 4 strategic pillars of the WHO global leprosy strategy ([Towards zero leprosy: global leprosy \(Hansen's disease\) strategy 2021–2030](#)) to achieve zero leprosy is to scale up leprosy prevention alongside integrative active case detection. Novartis foundation funded [Leprosy Post-Exposure Prophylaxis \(LPEP\)](#) was instrumental in inclusion of single dose rifampicin (SDR) in the [WHO Guidelines for the Diagnosis, Treatment and Prevention of Leprosy](#) in 2018. To ensure the leprosy endemic countries have uninterrupted access to SDR, Novartis has included funding for SDR in its donation program with WHO.

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

Novartis Global Health 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 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 has helped to treat more than 8.3 million leprosy patients since 2000.

[Learn more](#)

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