

YOUR HEALTH

LEPROSY

What is leprosy?

Leprosy is a communicable disease caused by mycobacterium leprae. It is a notifiable condition.

Leprosy is a chronic bacterial disease of the skin and nerves in the hands and feet and, in some cases, the lining of the nose. About 4 000 people in South Africa need medical and social care because of leprosy.

Who gets leprosy?

Anyone can get leprosy, but children seem to be more susceptible than adults.

How is leprosy spread?

Leprosy is spread when an untreated infected person coughs or sneezes (but not by sexual contact or pregnancy). However, leprosy is not very contagious; about 95% of people have natural immunity to the disease. People with leprosy who are treated with medication do not need to be isolated from society. (Historically, people with leprosy were sent to "lepers' colonies" on remote islands or in special hospitals).

Signs and symptoms of leprosy

The earliest sign of leprosy is commonly a spot on the skin that may be slightly redder, darker or lighter than the person's normal skin. The spot may lose feeling and hair. In some people the only sign is numbness in a finger or toe.

If left untreated, leprosy has serious effects on the body, including:

☐ Hands and feet: Leprosy bacteria attack the nerves in

the hands and feet and cause them to become numb. A person may get cuts or burns on the numb parts and not know it, leading to infections which cause permanent damage. Fingers and toes may be lost to infection. Serious infections in the feet may require amputation. Paralysis may cause the fingers and toes to curl up permanently.

☐ Eyes: Leprosy bacteria attack the nerves around the eyes causing the loss of blinking reflex (which protects the eye and moistens the surface). The eyes become dry and infected, and blindness may result. Due to numbness of the eye, the person cannot feel dirt or scratches in the eye.

☐ Face: Damage to the internal lining of the nose causes scarring and eventual collapse of the nose.

How can leprosy be prevented?

The best way to prevent the spread of leprosy is the early diagnosis and treatment of people who are infected. For household contacts, regular check ups are recommended for at least five years after last contact with a person who is infectious.

A hopeful outlook

Before treatment was available, a diagnosis of leprosy meant suffering and pain and being shunned by society. Today, antibiotics and good skin care will prevent the disease from destroying the body. Perhaps in the future a vaccine will eliminate this ancient scourge altogether.

☐ Compiled by the eThekweni Health Department

PROFILES: WARDS

The city comprises 100 wards, each with its own ward committee. In this, and forthcoming editions we will profile these wards so you can get to know them better. This week we look at Ward 11



Ward: 11
Councillor: Mduduzi Joel Madondo
Party: ANC
Contact: 031 311 1111
Areas within ward: KwaMashu (D Section), Newlands East, Siyanda and New Camp (Interface)
Community need assessment priorities: Housing and basic services, safety and security, education and skills development, job creation and maintenance (striving for sustainability).

| Household income (pa) | Households | % |
|-------------------------|------------|----|
| No income | 2 172 | 23 |
| R1 – R4 800 | 600 | 6 |
| R4 801 – R9 600 | 1 223 | 13 |
| R9 601 – R19 200 | 1 408 | 15 |
| R19 201 – R38 400 | 1 535 | 16 |
| R38 401 – R76 800 | 1 421 | 15 |
| R76 801 – R153 600 | 797 | 9 |
| R153 601 – R307 200 | 149 | 2 |
| R307 201 – R614 400 | 21 | 0 |
| R614 401 – R1 228 800 | 3 | 0 |
| R1 228 801 - R2 457 600 | 12 | 0 |
| R2 457 601 and more | 3 | 0 |

| Work Status | 15 – 65 years | % |
|-----------------------------------|---------------|----|
| Employed | 9 808 | 36 |
| Unemployed | 8 803 | 32 |
| Not Economically Active | 8 694 | 32 |
| Literacy Rate (Grade 7 and above) | 22 446 | 55 |
| Dependency Ratio | | 4 |

| Delivery Of Basic Household Services | | % |
|--------------------------------------|-------|-----|
| Electricity | 2 001 | 56 |
| Refuse Disposal | 2 007 | 100 |
| Flush Toilets | 2 001 | 63 |
| Water - dwelling/yard | 2 007 | 98 |
| Water < 200m | | |

| Dwelling type | | |
|----------------------|-------|----|
| Number of households | | % |
| Formal | 5 517 | 59 |
| Informal | 3 407 | 37 |
| Traditional | 299 | 3 |
| Other | 80 | 1 |

| Age | | % |
|-------------|--------|----|
| Age 0 – 4 | 3 951 | 10 |
| Age 5 – 14 | 8 283 | 20 |
| Age 15 – 34 | 16 029 | 40 |
| Age 35 – 64 | 11 145 | 28 |
| Age > 65 | 1 092 | 3 |

| Population | 40 499 | % |
|------------|--------|----|
| African | 25 554 | 63 |
| Coloured | 14 689 | 36 |
| Indian | 233 | 1 |
| White | 23 | 0 |
| Pensioners | 1 092 | 3 |
| Disabled | 1 310 | 3 |
| Male | 18 769 | 46 |
| Female | 21 730 | 54 |

| Major Community Facilities located in the Ward include: | |
|---|---|
| Library | 1 |
| Clinics | 1 |
| Police | 0 |
| Hospital | 0 |
| Pension pay points | 0 |
| Billing points | 0 |
| Metro police | 0 |
| Fire stations | 0 |
| Community halls | 1 |
| Post office | 0 |
| Schools | 9 |

| Approved Capital Projects (R million) | | | | |
|--|-------------------------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| Project | Type Task | 2007/2008 | 2008/2009 | 2009/2010 |
| Engineering Coastal, Stormwater & Catchment Management | Whiptail Avenue | 0.36 | 0.0 | 0.0 |
| Parks, Recreation & Culture: Parks, Leisure & Cemeteries | Newlands East: Infrastructure | 0.6 | 0.4 | 0.0 |
| | | | | |
| | | | | |
| | | | | |



IMAGINE Durban, the City's project aimed at encouraging community participation in creating a more sustainable eThekweni, has launched a schools competition.

Pupils stand to win vouchers worth R500 and schools R15 000, in several categories.

The art/poster competition invites Grade 1 to 7 pupils to draw an A2 poster of their dream for their area.

A creative writing competition for Grades 8 to 12 pupils involves writing an essay of 1 500 to 2 000 words on a great way to make Durban a better place.

Other categories are Most Sustainable School and Most Sustainable Idea by a School.

Jacque Subban, Head of the Geographic Information and Policy Unit, said the competition encouraged children to think sustainably. "We would like to get pupils' views on what they would like for Durban in the future.

"We would like our youth to spare a moment to think about what they can do to make Durban the city of their dreams. If we can get their input now, we can take steps to lay the foundation for their

Imagining tomorrow today

dreams to become a reality," Subban said.

Teachers must choose the best two entries for each grade and

submit them to the Imagine Durban Offices.

To help disadvantaged schools, crayons and poster paper is available to the first 100 schools, on request.

The deadline for entries is 16 July.

For more details, contact Shameshni Govender at 031 311 3423, e-mail: govendershameshni@durban.gov.za or Zamah Ndlovu at 031 311 3444, e-mail: ndlovuzc@durban.gov.za .

www.imaginedurban.org .

– Sohana Singh