



**MINISTRY OF HEALTH,
WELLNESS AND THE
ENVIRONMENT**

**Ministerial Building, Kingstown,
Saint Vincent and the Grenadines**

PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Kingstown, St. Vincent and the Grenadines

LEPROSY - SVG SURVEILLANCE REPORT

Hansen's disease (also known as leprosy) is an infection caused by a slow-growing bacteria. The leprosy bacteria can be spread when a person with Hansen's disease (leprosy) coughs or sneezes, and someone else breathes in the droplets containing the bacteria repeatedly (over a prolonged period of time).

Leprosy can affect the nerves, skin, eyes, and lining of the nose (nasal mucosa). With early diagnosis and treatment, the disease can be cured. It's important to note that people with Leprosy disease can continue to work and live an active life during and after treatment.

While Leprosy was once feared to be a highly contagious and devastating disease, the Ministry would like to reassure the public that leprosy does not spread easily and treatment is very effective. However, if left untreated, the nerve damage associated with leprosy can result in deformities of hands and feet, paralysis, and blindness.

St Vincent and the Grenadines has not seen any new cases of leprosy for the period 2022 - January 15th 2024. For the last five (5) years the following was reported:

2018 - No case of leprosy recorded
2019 - One case detected, successfully managed and living a normal life.
2020 - No case of leprosy recorded
2021 - No case of leprosy recorded
2022 - No case of leprosy recorded
2023 - No case of leprosy recorded

The Ministry of Health will continue to closely monitor the situation in our neighboring islands while increasing surveillance for leprosy throughout SVG.

The Ministry takes this time to encourage Vincentians to continue to take all the usual precautionary measures against respiratory infections such as covering mouths and nostrils when coughing and washing hands frequently.
