

## **Hansen's Disease (Leprosy)**

Agent: *Mycobacterium leprae* (bacteria)

Mode of Transmission: Person-to-person transmission, probably through respiratory droplets from persons with untreated lepromatous disease (those with discolored spots on the skin).

Signs/Symptoms: A chronic disease with varying symptoms, including skin lesions (tuberculoid leprosy); discolored, flat spots on the skin (lepromatous leprosy); nasal congestion; nosebleeds; and nerve damage.

Prevention: Early diagnosis and treatment is important. Hand washing when in contact with patients with lepromatous leprosy and disinfection of surfaces contaminated with infectious nasal secretions should be performed until treatment is established.

One case of Hansen's disease was reported in Virginia during 2010. The case occurred in an adult female immigrant from the Philippines. Given the long incubation period for this condition, exposure is likely to have occurred while the individual resided in the Philippines and before she immigrated to this country. Prior to 2010, the last reported case of Hansen's disease in Virginia occurred in 2007. The five-year average for the occurrence of this condition in Virginia is less than one case per year.