

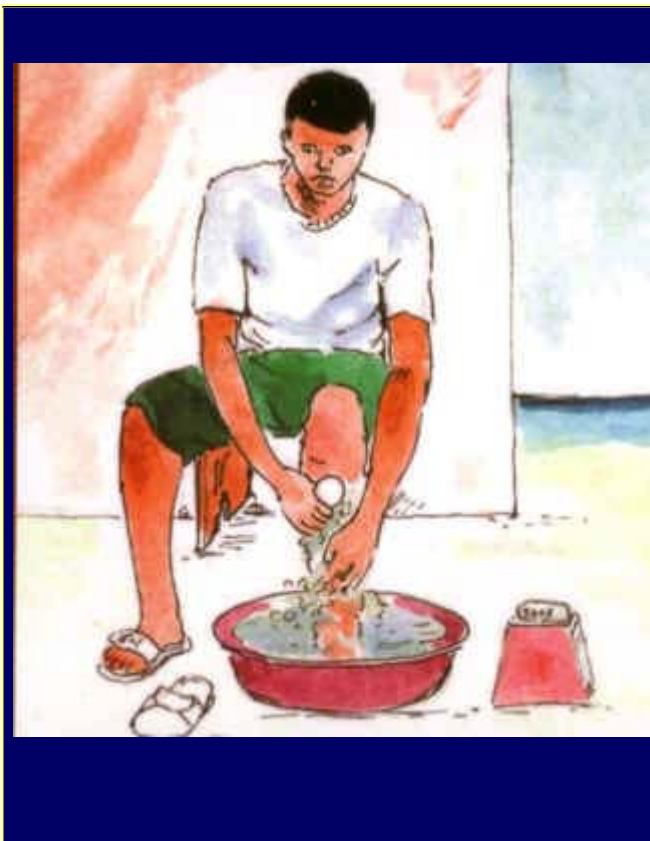


## Lymphatic Filariasis: Community-based prevention of disabilities



This course on community and home based care for persons affected with lymphatic filariasis, is based on teaching and learning materials produced by Communicable diseases team of **World Health Organisation (WHO)**.

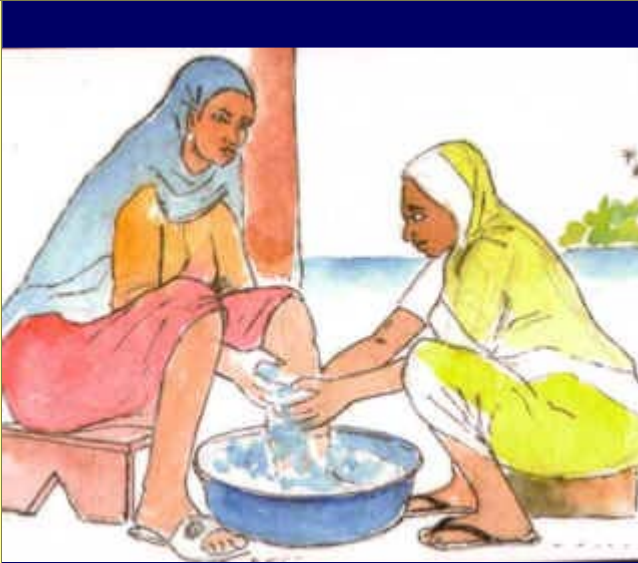
This course explains the simple measures that the persons can take at home to avoid and minimise the disabilities caused by lymphatic filariasis.



**When the leg or another part of the body is swollen, there are some simple measures to avoid further swelling and pain.**

**These measures help the person to walk more easily, to be able to work and to participate in social and religious activities.**

**The first step is to carefully wash the limb with soap and clean with water at room temperature and to look for small wounds, blisters, minor cuts, scratches, etc.**



**Help from a relative, parent or friend can be useful to wash and clean places that may be difficult for the person to reach.**

**The person helping in the cleaning of the body, does not risk catching the disease because it is transmitted only by mosquitoes.**

**The leg and foot are washed gently, including in between the toes and folds, using a clean cloth.**

**Washing the leg is important to protect skin from infection.**



**Dry the leg or other part of the body affected by lymphoedema, carefully and gently.**

**It is very important that after washing, the part is dried gently, to avoid damaging the skin.**



**To dry the leg or other affected part of the body, use a clean cloth. Extra attention should be paid to drying carefully in between the toes and folds.**

**If the person has difficulty in reaching parts of the leg or foot, help should be asked from a relative or friend.**



**Keep the leg elevated during the day and at night, when ever possible.**

**If the leg is swollen, ask the person to make sure that it is raised as much as possible.**

**The person can continue to do activities such as cooking and working, even while sitting with the leg raised.**



**If the leg is swollen, it is important to keep it raised as much as possible. At the same time, the person can engage in usual family and day to day activities such as breast-feeding the child, playing, talking with friends and relatives, etc.**

**The leg should be raised in comfortable position with the help of a stool or a cushion, while sitting.**



**It is important to keep the swollen leg raised also during the night.**

**This can be done by putting a pillow under the mattress or by putting bricks under the foot-end of the bed.**

**If another part of the body such as breast, arm or scrotum, these can also be elevated at night by putting a pillow or folded blanket under it.**

**Raising up the affected body part is a simple activity that can help a lot to improve the condition and to enable the persons to carry out their daily activities more easily.**



**It is important to exercise the leg several times in a day and this also helps to improve the condition.**

**A simple exercise is to rise up and down on the toes. This exercise can be done standing or sitting.**

**The exercise should be done as often as possible. If the person feels tired, then he or she should stop exercising and rest.**



**Another simple exercise is to flex the foot upwards and make a circle with the ankle.**

**It is important to exercise the leg several times in a day and this also helps to improve the condition.**

**The exercises should be done as often as possible. If the person feels tired, then he or she should stop exercising and rest.**



**ACUTE ATTACK:** During an acute attack, the following can occur:

- Very intense, deep pain of swollen leg
- **Red and painful skin**
- High fever, headache and shivering
- **Nausea and vomiting**

The simple measures such as washing & cleaning, raising up and exercising, if done regularly can prevent the acute attacks.



**THINGS TO DO IN AN ACUTE ATTACK:** To relieve the acute attack, following measures should be taken:

- Soak the leg in a bucket or tub of cold water or apply a cold compress
- Continue to cool the leg till the pain stops
- Drink plenty of water
- Rest and do not exercise



**THINGS TO DO IN AN ACUTE ATTACK:** To relieve the acute attack, following measures should be taken:

- Take medicines such as paracetamol for bringing down the fever
- **Sometimes antibiotics may be necessary**
- As soon as pain is gone, leg should be washed thoroughly and carefully, including between the toes and folds. After washing, the leg, toes and folds should be dried very gently.



**THINGS TO DO IN AN ACUTE ATTACK:** To relieve the acute attack, following measures should be taken:

**If there are any wounds or infection in the leg, after washing carefully and drying gently, an antiseptic cream or ointment can be applied.**

**If they well enough, nursing mothers can continue to breastfeed the baby during acute attack.**

**Acute attack is not contagious to others.**



**THINGS NOT TO DO IN AN ACUTE ATTACK:**

**Do not put any thing hot or warm on the skin. Thus, do not put the foot in hot water or use hot compresses. This will worsen the condition.**



**THINGS NOT TO DO IN AN ACUTE ATTACK:**

**Do not cut the skin to remove excess fluid or blood. This will worsen the condition.**

**Do not bandage the leg.**



**THINGS NOT TO DO IN AN ACUTE ATTACK:**

**Do not open or cut a blister. This will lead to infection and worsen the condition.**

**During an acute attack, the person should not exercise.**



**It is important to explain to persons suffering from lymphatic filariasis about these simple measures of washing, drying, elevating and exercising, so that disabilities and acute attacks are prevented.**

**Thank you for completing this online course on simple, community based care for prevention of disabilities in lymphatic filariasis.**

**We shall appreciate receiving your comments and suggestions. It will help us to improve this course. Send an email to [sunil.deepak@aifo.it](mailto:sunil.deepak@aifo.it)**

**Course preparation and online website graphic design by Medical Support Department, AIFO, Italy**