

Instructions for Making Leprosy Bandages - Updated June 2009 CROCHETED OR KNITTED LEPROSY BANDAGES

Patterns/Instructions:

Finished Size: approximately 3 1/2 to 4 inches wide by 4 feet long. If it shrinks up to be a bit smaller when washed...don't worry that is fine. They are used to wrap everything from tiny fingers to the stumps of lost legs and feet. No two applications are the same so our bandages can vary a bit as well.

Material specifications: 100% mercerized crochet cotton – size #10 - white, cream or ecru (no irritating dyes). This is commonly called “bedspread cotton” (1 'ball/skein' will usually make two bandages.)

Suggested brands include: South Maid D54, DMC Traditions, Aunt Lydia's Classic Crochet Thread, Cro Sheen and JP Coats. You can find these online as well as at your local Wal-Mart, fabric or craft store.

Tightness:

The ones shown in pictures on the blog are good examples of how the bandages should look. It should be a 'medium-tight', not strangling, but fairly close, with breathable holes. If yours look Mesh-like they are too loose - please switch to a smaller crochet hook (size D) or knitting needle (size 2). These are tighter and made with smaller thread/yarn (no worsted weight) than the ones Global Health used to send to India as the climate and needs are different in Vietnam.

Knitted Leprosy Bandage: Use size 2 (2.75 mm = UK 12) knitting needles if you knit average or loosely, size 3 (3.25 mm = UK 10) needles if you knit tightly. I use little double pointed needles with the point protectors on the tips, so I can carry them in my purse.

Cast on 24 to 28 stitches so the bandage measures 3 1/2 to 4" across. Knit every row until bandage is desired length of 48 inches long, and then bind off. PLEASE secure thread end by slipping thread through last stitch, tying a double knot, and weaving end back through stitches.

Crocheted Leprosy Bandage:

Use size D (3.00 mm = UK 11) or E (3.50 mm = UK 9) crochet hook (loose tension desirable).

Chain enough stitches to measure about 3" - 4" in width. (I use 23 chs and an E hook, and it takes about 6 rows to equal one inch.)

Row 1: Single crochet into each chain. Chain 1 and turn.

Rows 2: Single crochet into each sc across row. Ch 1 and turn. Continue to single crochet to end, chain 1 and turn. Repeat row 2 until bandage measures 48 inches long.

Finish off by pulling thread through last loop and secure with a knot.

Please weave end back through stitches. I use a sewing needle to do this.

When Completed:

After you have woven the ends back into the stitches, wash the bandages, roll them and secure with a large safety pin. Put in plastic bag (several to a bag if desired), remove air, and seal.

NOTE: The bandages do NOT have to 'perfect', so if you are afraid yours are not “straight” enough or you dropped a stitch 5 rows before, don't let that stop you. Relax and have fun making them. The recipients recognize the time involved in making these and it is a special blessing to them that someone cares enough to take the time. Each one is cherished and gratefully accepted.

Why handmade bandages and not gauze or store bought? The leper bandages breathe better, and can be sterilized for reuse. The lepers wear these bandages on their stumps as well as on sores. In some cases the bandages become like their shoes as they move on their stumps. Gauze would wear out much too fast.

