

# Cholera Prevention and Control

## What is cholera disease?

- Cholera disease causes a lot of watery diarrhea and vomiting.
- Cholera diarrhea can look like cloudy rice water.
- Cholera can cause death from dehydration (the loss of water and salts from the body) within hours if not treated.

## How is cholera spread?

- Cholera germs are found in the feces (poop) of infected people.
- Cholera is spread when feces (poop) from an infected person gets into the water people drink or the food people eat.
- Cholera is **not** likely to spread directly from one person to another.

## Protect yourself and your family from cholera and other diarrheal diseases:

- Drink and use safe water.  
Safe water is water that is bottled with an unbroken seal, has been boiled, or has been treated with a chlorine product.
- Wash hands often with soap and safe water.  
If no soap is available, scrub hands often with ash or sand and rinse with safe water.
- Use latrines or bury your feces (poop), do **not** defecate in any body of water.
- Cook food well (especially seafood), eat it hot, keep it covered, and peel fruits and vegetables.
- Clean up safely—in the kitchen and in places where your family bathes and washes clothes.

## What to do if you or your family are ill with diarrhea:

- If you have oral rehydration solution (ORS), start taking it now; it can save your life.
- Go immediately to the nearest health facility.  
Continue to drink ORS at home and while you travel to get treatment.
- Continue to breastfeed your baby if they have watery diarrhea, even when traveling to get treatment.



# Protect Yourself from Cholera:

## 1) Drink and use safe water.\*

- Bottled water with unbroken seals and canned/bottled carbonated beverages are safe to drink and use.
- Use safe water to brush your teeth, wash and prepare food, and to make ice.
- Clean food preparation areas and kitchenware with soap and safe water and let dry completely before reuse.

### To be sure water is safe to drink and use:

- Boil it or treat it with a chlorine product or household bleach.
- If boiling, bring your water to a complete boil for at least 1 minute.
- To treat your water with chlorine, use one of the locally available treatment products and follow the instructions.
- If a chlorine treatment product is not available, you can treat your water with household bleach. Add 8 drops of household bleach for every 1 gallon of water (or 2 drops of household bleach for every 1 liter of water) and wait 30 minutes before drinking.
- Always store your treated water in a clean, covered container.

**\* Piped water sources, drinks sold in cups or bags, or ice may not be safe and should be boiled or treated with chlorine.**

## 2) Wash your hands often with soap and safe water.\*

- Before you eat or prepare food.
- Before feeding your children.
- After using the latrine or toilet.
- After cleaning your child's bottom.
- After taking care of someone ill with diarrhea.

**\* If no soap is available, scrub hands often with ash or sand and rinse with safe water.**

## 3) Use latrines or bury your feces (poop); do not defecate in any body of water.

- Use latrines or other sanitation systems, like chemical toilets, to dispose of feces.
- Wash hands with soap and safe water after defecating.
- Clean latrines and surfaces contaminated with feces using a solution of 1 part household bleach to 9 parts water.

### What if I don't have a latrine or chemical toilet?

- Defecate at least 30 meters (98 feet) away from any body of water and then bury your feces.
- Dispose of plastic bags containing feces in latrines, at collection points if available, or bury it in the ground. Do **not** put plastic bags in chemical toilets.
- Dig new latrines or temporary pit toilets at least a half-meter (1.6 feet) deep and at least 30 meters (98 feet) away from any body of water.

## 4) Cook food well, keep it covered, eat it hot, and peel fruits and vegetables.\*

- Boil it, Cook it, Peel it, or Leave it.
- Be sure to cook seafood, especially shellfish, until it is very hot all the way through.

**\* Avoid raw foods other than fruits and vegetables you have peeled yourself.**

## 5) Clean up safely— in the kitchen and in places where the family bathes and washes clothes.

- Wash yourself, your children, diapers, and clothes, 30 meters (98 feet) away from drinking water sources.