WHAT IS AWD/CHOLERA AND HOW TO PREVENT AND RESPOND IT

Cholera can kill within a few hours, but there are simple ways of protecting oneself from catching cholera and it is easy to treat if the patient gets help at an early stage. Remember that only around 2 out of 10 people that catch cholera will show symptoms and fall ill, but 8 out of 10 can carry the disease and spread it. Therefore, it is important that everyone follow the recommendations of good hygiene.

What is cholera?

- Cholera is a diarrhoeal disease that leads to dehydration (loss of water and salts from the body)
- Cholera can kill within a few hours if not treated
- The symptoms are
  - watery diarrhoea several times every day. The diarrhoea looks like cloudy rice water.
  - vomiting

How does cholera spread?

- Cholera bacteria are found in the faeces of infected persons
- Cholera is transmitted by dirty hands, water or food that has been contaminated by faeces.

How to prevent cholera

The way to stop the spread of cholera is to stop the transmission routes.

- Hand washing with soap, ash or chlorine solution
  - Hand washing should be done
    - After visiting the toilet
    - After cleaning the child’s bottom
    - Before preparing food
    - Before eating
- Only drink safe water. Water is made safe through
  - Boiling
  - Chlorination, for example with aquatabs
  - Make sure the water container is clean and properly closed
- Cook food thoroughly. Avoid undercooked or raw food. Peel any fruits and vegetables.
- Clean kitchen utensils with soap, chlorine solution or in boiling water. Keep kitchen area clean.
- Dispose of/bury excreta and vomit in a safe place, away from any water source.
  If available, use latrine. Do not defecate in any water body.
If you suspect someone has Cholera...

Immediately...
- Start giving ORS (Oral Rehydration Solution)
- Seek professional healthcare as cholera can kill within hours. This could be a local health centre, ORS point or a Cholera Treatment Centre.
- Continue giving ORS while going to the health centre
- Continue to breastfeed your baby if they have watery diarrhoea, even when travelling to get treatment.

If ORS sachets are available, ensure correct measurements to mix the solution and only use safe water. Give ORS at least 5-7 times per day. Even if ORS sachets are not available it is necessary to replace lost fluids until reaching a health facility, like for example soups, but avoid sugary drinks.

While caring for a patient with suspected Cholera...
- Wash hands with soap, ash or chlorine solution after taking care of patients – touching them, their stools, their vomits or their clothes
- Do not contaminate the water source by washing the patient’s or your own clothes in the water. The clothes should be washed in chorine solution or boiled while stirring. Dry the clothes in direct sunlight.
- Wash latrines and places where the person might have had diarrhoea or have been vomiting with chlorine solution or soap.
- Inform and explain good hygiene practises to people in the family or other people that have been in contact with the patient

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>When to use 0.05% Chlorine</th>
<th>When to use 0.2% Chlorine</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Disinfect utensils used by cholera patients like; dishes, spoons etc.</td>
<td>Disinfect latrines that have been used by cholera patients.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Washing hands after using the toilet, handling a cholera patient, before preparing food. (If 0.05% chlorine is used, soap is not required</td>
<td>Disinfect place where cholera patients have vomited or had diarrhoea.</td>
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<td>How to make chlorine solution</td>
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<tr>
<td>0.05%</td>
<td>0.2%</td>
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<tr>
<td>With Bleach 5% (Sodium hypochlorite solution):</td>
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<tr>
<td>• 14 tablespoons in 20 litres of water</td>
<td>• 20 tablespoons in 5 litres of water</td>
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<tr>
<td>• ⅛ of cup in 20 litres of water</td>
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</tbody>
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Note: 1 tablespoon = 10mL, 1 cup = 200 mL

BE ALERT!
Cholera can lead to death within hours: Early treatment with fluids such Oral Rehydration Salts (ORS) saves lives.