

# CHOLERA



## What is Cholera?

Cholera is a sickness caused by germs (*vibrio cholerae*) that attack a person's stomach and .It is characterized by a massive loss of body fluids, through diarrhea and vomiting

## Which signs should one look for?

- Diarrhea, stools with appearance of “rice water”
- Severe dehydration - the person loses a lot of water very quickly, feels weak and complains of cramps in arms and legs.

## How is cholera transmitted?

Water that is safe at point of collection is often exposed to faecal contamination during collection, transport and use in the home, mainly by unclean hands. Any person can contract the disease by ingesting water or food contaminated by *Vibrio cholera*. An infected person and then pass it on to another person. The bacteria can also survive in food especially seafood. Infections can be acquired from ice cubes prepared from contaminated water

## How do the germs spread from one person to another?

The disease is spread by poor sanitation. When infected people empty their bowels, the germs come out with the stool. The stool gets onto a person's hands or into drinking water or onto food. The germs can spread to other people when they drink the water or eat the food, which looks OK, but contains germs. Once inside the body, it can make that person sick.

## How can we stop cholera?

There are a few things that people can do so that germs do not spread from one person to another:

- Always wash your hands after going to the toilet and before preparing food.
- It is best to build and use one toilet.
- The toilet should be kept clean.
- The toilet should be far away from the river or stream that is used for drinking or washing.
- Wash your hands each time after you have been to the toilet Wash your hands each time before you touch food or work with food.
- Wash fruit and vegetables before you eat them.

## How can water be made clean and safe?

Boil the water for at least 10 minutes OR add bleach to the water.

**If you need a lot of water:** add 1 teaspoon of Jik to 25 liters of water and mix it. Leave the water in the container overnight or for at least 2 hours before using the water.

**If little water is needed :** you add 5 drops of bleach to one liter of water and leave it for half an hour before use.

## How can you help someone who has cholera?

A person can die from Cholera very quickly. This is due to loss of water and body salt and sugar. Most important is to give a water, salt and sugar mixture in large amounts.

**A special mixture which can be made at home:** Take 1 Liter clean water, 8 level teaspoons sugar, half level teaspoon salt. Mix all together. This mixture must be given by mouth as soon as the person passes the first watery stool

Visit [www.reservoir.co.za](http://www.reservoir.co.za) for further information on water quality in your area.

