

CHOLERA



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Department:
Health
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

What is Cholera?

Cholera is an acute diarrhoeal illness caused by a germ called *Vibrio cholerae* bacterium found in contaminated “untreated water”.

How does cholera spread?

The most common spread of cholera is through drinking contaminated water. This is followed by the use of untreated water for household purposes, e.g to wash and cook food. Unclean hands and contact with an infected person's stools and/or contaminated bedding can also spread the germ.

What are the signs and symptoms of Cholera?

Cholera symptoms can range from mild to severe and include:

Severe watery diarrhoea

- Nausea and vomiting
- Muscle cramps
- Dehydration: The body loses water, natural salts and sugars because of diarrhoea and vomiting. If these elements are not replaced, a person will dehydrate very quickly. Depending on how much body fluid has been lost, dehydration can range from mild to severe. Dehydration is very dangerous and could lead to coma and death within a few hours.
- Shock.

What can I do to protect myself and others from Cholera?

- Wash your hands after using the toilet
- Wash your hands before cooking
- Ensure usage of clean sanitation hygiene
- Wash fruit and vegetables before eating
- Do not play in or use water from streams, rivers and dams.

How is cholera treated?

Successful treatment requires the replacement of fluids and salts lost through the diarrhoea and vomiting. Should you have the signs or symptoms of cholera, visit your nearest health facility for immediate treatment



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