

## What to know before you go:



### What is cholera?

Cholera is an acute diarrhoeal disease that can be life threatening, but is easily prevented and treated.

### Oral cholera vaccines (OCV):

OCVs are only to be considered for travellers at high risk (emergency/ relief workers); who are likely to be directly exposed to cholera patients or to contaminated food or water, particularly those staying in areas with poor access to health care facilities.

### How is cholera spread?

Cholera is caused by ingestion of food or water contaminated with the bacterium *Vibrio cholerae*.

### What are the symptoms of cholera?

Most people infected with *V. cholerae* do not develop any symptoms. Those who do develop severe symptoms usually have profuse watery diarrhoea and vomiting, but cholera may also present as acute watery diarrhoea. In more severe cases, symptoms can lead to severe dehydration and even death if not treated promptly.



## What to know during duty travel:

### How can I prevent from getting infected with cholera?

- Practice safe food handling and follow WHO's Five Keys to Safer Food:
  1. **Keep clean:** Wash your hands often with safe water and soap and always before handling and consuming food. If no soap is available, scrub hands often with ash or sand and rinse with safe water.
  2. **Separate raw and cooked food:** Make sure that cooked food is not in contact with raw food that could contaminate it. Avoid any uncooked food, apart from fruits and vegetables that can be peeled or shelled.
  3. **Cook thoroughly:** Make sure your food has been thoroughly cooked and remains steaming hot.
  4. **Keep food at safe temperatures:** Avoid foods at buffets, markets, restaurants and street vendors if they are not kept hot or refrigerated/on ice .
  5. **Only consume safe water and food:** Safe water is water that is bottled with an unbroken seal, has been boiled or has been treated with a chlorine product. Peel all fruits and vegetables if eaten raw.
- Avoid unprotected contact with cholera patients





## What to know during duty travel:

### What do I do if I think I have cholera?

- If you have oral rehydration solution (ORS), start taking it immediately
- Seek health advice immediately from the UN or other Physician
- Continue to drink ORS at home and during your travel to get treatment

## What to know after duty travel:

Medical follow up is strongly recommended if you have had symptoms during your mission or after returning from duty travel . Staff and non-staff must call the emergency number of the country highlighting their recent travel and report to WHO medical services (either SHW in HQ or regional medical services).

## For more information:

**WHO Cholera Factsheet:** <http://www.who.int/mediacentre/factsheets/fs107/en/>

**OpenWHO Cholera:** <https://openwho.org/courses/cholera-introduction-en>

**UN Medical Services around the Globe:** <https://hr.un.org/page/medical-services-around-globe>



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