

United Nations Medical Directors

Reducing the Risk of Acquiring Cholera in a Cholera-Affected Country/Area

Recommendations for UN Personnel and Dependents

- The following occupational health recommendations are provided by the UN Medical Directors to all Organizations and UN personnel in order to reduce the risk of UN personnel and their dependents from contracting cholera.
- These recommendations should be applied to UN personnel deploying to or residing in cholera-affected countries/areas.
- If this is a hard copy of the document, please be sure to check the [Cholera page](#) on the HR Portal (to ensure you have the latest version).
- Please contact msdpublichealth@un.org if you have any questions on this document.

UN Personnel Risk Categories

UN Medical Directors Recommendations

1 All UN personnel travelling into or residing in a cholera-affected country/area

- **Drink and use only safe water.**
 - Piped water sources, tap water, drinks sold in cups or bags, or ice cubes may NOT be safe and should be boiled or treated with chlorine.
 - Bottled water with unbroken seals are safe to drink and use.
 - Use only 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.

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All UN personnel
travelling into or
residing in a
cholera-affected
country/area

- **Wash hands frequently 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 diarrhoea.

 - **Cook food well, keep it covered, eat it hot, and peel fruits and vegetables.**
 - Avoid raw foods other than fruits and vegetables you have peeled yourself.
 - 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.

 - **Use latrine or bury your faeces, do not defecate in any body/courses of water.**
 - Use latrines or other sanitation systems, like chemical toilets, to dispose of faeces.
 - Wash hands with soap and safe water after defecating.
 - Clean latrines and surfaces contaminated with faeces using a solution of 1 part household bleach to 9 parts water.

 - ***If you don't have access to a latrine or chemical toilet (e.g. when travelling in convoys or away from your base), consider the following while taking into account any local security risks:***
 - Defecate at least 30 meters (98 feet) away from any courses/body of water and then bury your faeces.
 - Dispose of plastic bags containing faeces 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 courses/body of water.

 - **Know what to do if you or your family are ill with diarrhoea, including:**
 - 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 diarrhoea, even when traveling to get treatment.
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2 Any UN personnel conducting/will be conducting emergency/relief work in a cholera-affected country/area

- Implement all of the above advice, plus
- Seek advice from your medical practitioner, UN physician or your Organisation's Medical Services to assess your personal risk and evaluate the need for oral cholera vaccine (please follow manufacturer's instructions if used)

AND

who are likely to be:

- a) Directly exposed to cholera patients and/or**
- b) Exposed to contaminated food or water**

References:

- [WHO's Technical Note \(13 Jan 2016\)](#)
- [CDC's Five Basic Cholera Prevention Messages](#)