

# Cholera: symptoms, treatment, and prevention

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Countries with Cholera outbreak: Cholera has infected millions of people in many countries around the world. According to Kiem (2009), countries with cholera outbreak include but are not limited to Angola, Namibia, Botswana, Swaziland, Mozambique, Malawi, Zimbabwe, South Africa, and Zambia. We have cholera presenting itself on a more continual basis in a good number of countries. You have a combination of some transmission occurring along with the border areas from Zimbabwe, but we also have a situation where cholera has emerged in areas independent of what we're seeing in Zimbabwe. Most of the countries are still in a situation where an unacceptably high number of deaths are occurring. (Bob McCarthy cited in Kiem, 2009).

Symptoms of Cholera: Many people suffering from cholera don't catch a fever, and thus can not tell that they are infected. But this does not sap their ability to infect others with cholera because cholera bacteria are shed in their stool for one to two weeks. Most of the times, the patient experiences diarrhea but that is so mild that it is not possible to tell it from diarrhea caused by mild upsets in the digestive system. No more than 10 percent of the victims of cholera develop the signs and symptoms that are typical of cholera and are hence, recognizable for the patient. These typical signs and symptoms of cholera include but are not limited to an abrupt loss of fluid from the body, vomiting, nausea, and dehydration. The infected person loses up to .95 liters every hour. Diarrhea that is caused by cholera is characterized by its pale milky look which is similar to rice-water in appearance. The person suffering from cholera may vomit for hours continuously. Once the symptoms of cholera have started to show up, dehydration may persist for fours. It can be mild or severe depending upon the extent of fluid lost by the body. Severe dehydration in cholera is characterized by loss of fluid of more or equal to 10

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percent of the total weight of the body. The dehydration caused by cholera results into lethargy, irritability, dryness in the mouth, sunken eyes, dryness of skin and extreme thirst. The blood pressure goes down, the heartbeat loses rhythm and there is the limited output of urine. Dehydration may lead to an electrolyte imbalance which is essentially a reduction in the blood minerals responsible for retaining fluid balance in the body. Treatment of Cholera: Cholera is primarily treated with the help of oral rehydration therapy (ORT) because dehydration is the most fundamental result of cholera. In the ORT, the patient is repeatedly given water containing the required salts and sugars in large quantities to drink. One can easily find prepackaged mixtures of the salts and sugars concentrate to be mixed into water in the advanced countries, but it is not quite readily available in the developing countries. Nevertheless, the salt and sugar prepackaged concentrate can easily be replaced with the ingredients in common use in developing countries. Homemade recipes of ORT can be accessed on the web. In order to tackle the extreme cases of cholera, intravenous replacement of fluid may be required to treat the disease. Although antibiotics are helpful in minimizing the effects of cholera, yet it is always recommendable to support the treatment with ORT. Anti-diarrhea medicines must not be taken because they do not let the bacteria flushed out of the patient's body. Who are the victims of cholera? Cholera's biggest victims are the people resident of the developing countries or others making the tour to them. People of Latin America and South America are also at risk of cholera along with the local populations of Asia and Africa. However, people of the USA are generally safe from cholera because this disease is one of the rare

diseases in the USA, with the number of reported cases not exceeding 5 per year (Koo, 2010).