



# Identifying, testing, and reporting cholera

## Frontline role of health facility workers

### Key principles for health facility workers to identify, test, and report patients with suspected cholera

Beyond treating cholera, by contributing to cholera surveillance as a health facility worker, you also contribute to preventing cholera and ensuring rapid response to any outbreak. This is equally important during an outbreak or when there is no outbreak

#### If there is no outbreak

Your participation in surveillance is essential to detect an outbreak early to respond rapidly and prevent future cases

#### During an outbreak

Your participation in surveillance is essential to gather information to understand the outbreak to control it and prevent future cases

### • How to contribute to cholera surveillance?

- Identify patients with suspected cholera
- Collect stool samples for testing
- Collect and report information on patients with suspected cholera

Procedures vary depending on whether there is a cholera outbreak in your area. Always follow your health authority's guidance.

### • How to identify patients with suspected cholera?

A sign of cholera is Acute Watery Diarrhoea (AWD)

- **Acute:** Lasting less than 7 days
- **Watery:** Non-bloody liquid stools that may contain mucous
- **Diarrhoea:**  $\geq 3$  loose stools within a 24-hour period

#### If there is no outbreak

A suspected cholera case is a person  $\geq 2$ -year-old:  
- with **AWD** and **severe dehydration** or  
- who **died** from AWD

- **Severe dehydration**

- One or more danger signs (lethargic or unconscious; absent or weak pulse; respiratory distress)  
- Or at least two of the following: sunken eyes; not able to drink or drinks poorly; skin pinch goes back very slowly

#### During an outbreak

A suspected cholera case is **any person** with **AWD** or who **died** from AWD

### • How to collect information?

Collect standard information on **any patient meeting the definition** of a suspected cholera case that visits your facility using the form/tool provided by your health authority





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### • Who to test for cholera and how?

Specimen collection should **not delay rehydration**  
Test results are for surveillance; they do not guide clinical care

#### If there is no outbreak

##### If you have RDTs

- Test by **RDT any patient** meeting the definition of a suspected cholera case
- Collect a stool sample from **any patient tested positive by RDT** and send it to a laboratory

##### If you do not have RDTs

- Collect a stool sample from **any patient** meeting the definition of a suspected cholera case and send it to a laboratory

### • When to report?

#### If there is no outbreak

Report **daily** on any suspected cholera case

- If no suspected cholera case visited your facility, report the absence of cases at the end of the week (**zero reporting**)
- To report, use the mechanisms set at your health facility (e.g., focal point for reporting)

#### During an outbreak

##### If you have RDTs

- Test by **RDT the first 3 patients** meeting the definition of a suspected cholera case seen **each day** in your facility
- Follow the directions of your health authorities for collecting samples on patients tested positive by RDT

##### If you do not have RDTs

- Collect a stool sample from **the first 3 patients** meeting the definition of a suspected cholera case seen **on each week** in your facility and send them to a laboratory

#### During an outbreak

Report **weekly** on any suspected cholera case

### • Where to access supporting material?

<https://tinyurl.com/CholeraHealthFacility>

