

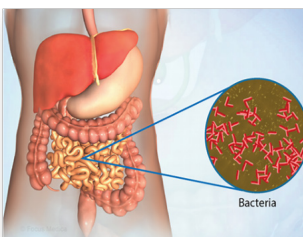


## CHOLERA

# Cholera Outbreak Gauteng

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- Cholera outbreak Gauteng - What you need to know
- What is Cholera
- What is covered as PMB level of care?
- Protect yourselves and your loved ones.



## What you need to know

Twenty-three people have lost their lives since the cholera outbreak in Hammanskraal, north of Pretoria, the Gauteng Department of Health (GDoH) said on Sunday.

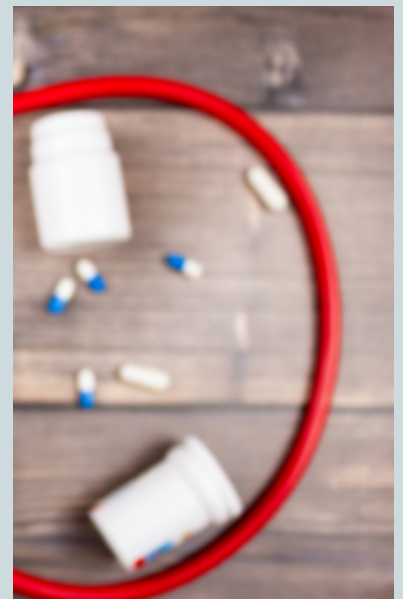
Meanwhile, as of 27 May 2023, 77 patients were still admitted for the waterborne disease.

“It is worth noting that 29 patients have since recovered and were discharged,” the provincial department said.

It said 229 patients have been seen at the Jubilee District Hospital since 15 May 2023, including 23 who have been transferred to other Tshwane-based hospitals.

“In the past few days, fewer patients have presented at health facilities with symptoms of diarrhoeal disease,” the statement read.

**Source: Cholera death toll climbs to 23 in Hammanskraal - South Africa | ReliefWeb - 1 June 2023**



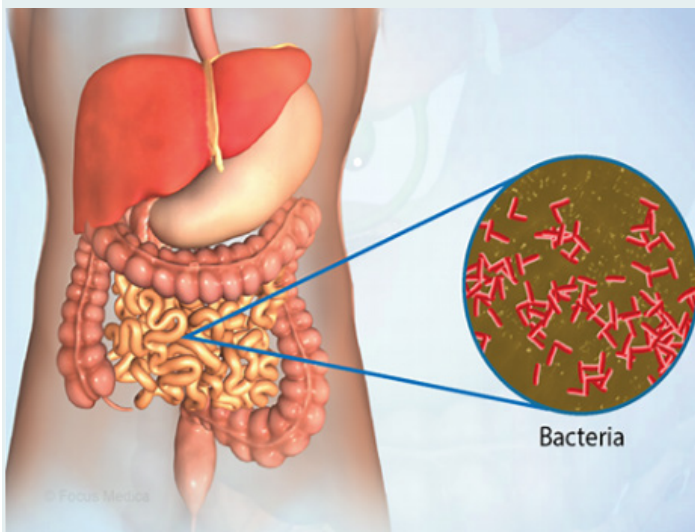
# What is Cholera

Cholera is an acute, diarrheal illness caused by infection of the intestine with the toxigenic bacterium *Vibrio cholerae* serogroup O1 or O139. An estimated 1.3 to 4 million people around the world get cholera each year and 21,000 to 143,000 people die from it. People who get cholera often have mild symptoms or no symptoms, but cholera can be severe. Approximately 1 in 10 people who get sick with cholera will develop severe symptoms such as watery diarrhea, vomiting, and leg cramps. In these people, rapid loss of body fluids leads to dehydration and shock. Without treatment, death can occur within hours.

## Where is cholera found?

The cholera bacterium is usually found in water or in foods that have been contaminated by feces (poop) from a person infected with cholera bacteria. Cholera is most likely to occur and spread in places with inadequate water treatment, poor sanitation, and inadequate hygiene.

Cholera bacteria can also live in the environment in brackish rivers and coastal waters. Shellfish eaten raw have been a source of infection. Rarely, people in the U.S. have contracted cholera after eating raw or undercooked shellfish from the Gulf of Mexico.



## How does a person get cholera?

A person can get cholera by drinking water or eating food contaminated with cholera bacteria. In an epidemic, the source of the contamination is usually the feces of an infected person that contaminates water or food. The disease can spread rapidly in areas with inadequate treatment of sewage and drinking water. The infection is not likely to spread directly from one person to another; therefore, casual contact with an infected person is not a risk factor for becoming ill.

## What are the symptoms of cholera?

Cholera infection is often mild or without symptoms but can be severe. Approximately 1 in 10 people who get sick with cholera will develop severe symptoms such as watery diarrhea, vomiting, and leg cramps. In these people, rapid loss of body fluids leads to dehydration and shock. Without treatment, death can occur within hours.

## How long after infection do the symptoms appear?

It usually takes 2-3 days for symptoms to appear after a person ingests cholera bacteria, but the time can range from a few hours to 5 days.

## Who is most likely to get cholera?

Persons living in places with unsafe drinking water, poor sanitation, and inadequate hygiene are at the highest risk for cholera.

## What should I do if I or someone I know gets sick?

If you think you or a member of your family might have cholera, seek medical attention immediately. Dehydration can be rapid so fluid replacement is essential. If you have oral rehydration solution (ORS), start taking it immediately; it can save a life. Continue to drink ORS at home and while traveling to get medical treatment. If an infant has watery diarrhea, continue breastfeeding.

## How is cholera diagnosed?

To test for cholera, doctors must take a stool sample or a rectal swab and send it to a laboratory to look for the cholera bacteria.

## What is the treatment for cholera?

Cholera can be simply and successfully treated by immediate replacement of the fluid and salts lost through diarrhea. Patients can be treated with oral rehydration solution (ORS), a pre-packaged mixture of sugar and salts that is mixed with 1 litre of water and drunk in large amounts. This solution is used throughout the world to treat diarrhea.

Severe cases also require intravenous fluid replacement. With prompt appropriate rehydration, fewer than 1% of cholera patients die.

Antibiotics shorten the course and diminish the severity of the illness, but they are not as important as rehydration. Persons who develop severe diarrhea and vomiting in countries where cholera occurs should seek medical attention promptly.

## Should I be worried about getting cholera from others?

The disease is not likely to spread directly from one person to another; therefore, casual contact with an infected person is not a risk factor for becoming ill.

## How can I avoid getting sick with cholera?

Be aware of whether cholera cases have recently occurred in an area you plan to visit. However, the risk for cholera is very low for people visiting areas with epidemic cholera when simple prevention steps are taken.

All visitors or residents in areas where cholera is occurring or has occurred should follow recommendations to prevent getting sick:

- Drink only bottled, boiled, or chemically treated water and bottled or canned beverages. When using bottled drinks, make sure the seal has not been broken. Carbonated water may be safer than non-carbonated water. Avoid tap water, fountain drinks, and ice cubes.

# What is Cholera continued...

- To disinfect your own water, choose one of the following options:
  - o Boil it for 1 minute, or
  - o Filter it and add either 1/2 an iodine tablet or 2 drops of household bleach per litre/quart of water, or
  - o Use commercial water chlorination tablets according to the manufacturer's instructions.
- Wash your hands often with soap and clean water, especially before you eat or prepare food and after using the bathroom.
  - o If no water and soap are available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol.
- Use bottled, boiled, or chemically treated water to wash dishes, brush teeth, wash and prepare food, and make ice.
- Eat foods that are packaged or that are freshly cooked and served hot.
  - o Do not eat raw or undercooked meats and seafood, or raw or undercooked fruits and vegetables unless they are peeled.
- Dispose of feces in a sanitary manner to prevent contamination of water and food sources.

Source: General Information | Cholera | CDC – 1 June 2023

# What is covered as PMB level of care?

“Cholera” is a PMB condition under Diagnosis and Treatment Pair (DTP) code 338S. The treatment component specified for this DTP is “Medical management.”

The medical schemes must pay for in and out-of-hospital consultations, tests, medicines, follow-up consultations and treatment in full if the services were obtained from a designated service provider (DSP). In case of an emergency, healthcare services must be paid in full, even if a non-DSP was used.

The healthcare practitioner must assist the member in completing the forms to register for PMB benefits which must be funded by the medical scheme from the risk-benefit. Funding of PMB claims from the Medical Savings Account (MSA) contravenes the Medical Schemes Act.

Source: CMScript5 of 2023 - Publications | Council for Medical Schemes - 1 June 2023

**CHOLERA**  
PROTECT YOURSELF AND YOUR LOVED ONES

**1 What is cholera?**  
Cholera is an infectious disease that causes severe watery diarrhoea, which can lead to dehydration and even death if untreated. It is caused by eating food or drinking water contaminated with a bacterium called *Vibrio cholerae*.

**2 What are the signs and symptoms of cholera?**  
Symptoms are often mild and can begin as soon as a few hours or as long as five days after infection. They typically include:

- Large volumes of explosive watery diarrhea, sometimes called "rice water stools" because it can look like water that has been used to wash rice
- Vomiting
- Leg cramps
- Dehydration occurs rapidly and if untreated can be fatal

**3 Who is at risk of getting cholera?**  
People at risk of contracting cholera are those exposed to unsafe drinking water, contaminated rivers (bathing/ swimming) poor sanitation and inadequate hygiene.

**4 How does a person get cholera?**  
You can get cholera by drinking water or eating food contaminated with human faeces. Soiled hands can also contaminate clean drinking water and food.

**5 What should you do if you or someone you know gets sick?**  
If you think you or a member of your family might have cholera, seek medical attention immediately.

**6 How is cholera treated?**  
Cholera can be treated by immediate replacement of the fluid and salts lost through diarrhea. Patients can be treated with Oral Rehydration Solution (ORS).

**7 How can you avoid getting cholera?**

**Use safe water**  
In areas where water supplies may be contaminated, the most cost-effective method is chlorination of water in a storage container using household bleach:

- Add one teaspoon (5 ml, or one capful if bottle has a screw cap) of household bleach to 20- 25 litres of water.
- Thoroughly mix solution with the water and allow to stand for at least two hours (preferably overnight) before use.
- Water should be stored covered in clean containers.

Boiling is also effective, however, there is a potential for microbial re-growth if the boiled water is stored beyond 1 - 2 days. Filtration may be necessary in addition to boiling if the only water available contains much particulate matter:

- Use a piece of clean white cloth to cover the opening of a 20-25 litre water container.
- Pour water through the clean cloth into the container.
- Clean the cloth and make sure it is always clean for future use

**Hygiene:** Wash your hands often with soap and clean water, especially before you eat or prepare food and after using the bathroom. If no water and soap are available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer with at least 70% alcohol.

**Food safety:** Make sure you use only safe water for drinking and preparing food.

**NATIONAL INSTITUTE FOR COMMUNICABLE DISEASES**  
Division of the National Health Laboratory Service

**Cholera Prevention**

- Drink and use safe water
- Wash hands regularly with soap and safe water

**Cholera Symptoms**

- Watery diarrhoea
- Vomiting
- Leg cramps

Source: A4 Cholera Poster (nicd.ac.za) 1 June 2023



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