

DIARRHOEA *prevention*



Most people will be affected by diarrhoea at some time in their life. But for many, especially babies and children, it can be deadly. 😊 Diarrhoea leads to dehydration, the main cause of death. Children are more likely than adults to die, because they become dehydrated more quickly. 😊 A drug that will stop the diarrhoea safely within a few hours does not exist. Yet the deaths of more than a million children a year could be prevented by a method that is cheap, safe and so simple it can be learned and used by anybody.

The treatment is Oral Rehydration Therapy, which is effective in most situations. Oral rehydration does not stop diarrhoea, but it does prevent the body from drying up by replacing the water and salts that help it retain water. This gives the body time and strength to do battle with whatever is causing the diarrhoea. 😊 ORT consists of salt and glucose. It is extremely cheap, costing as little as 5p per sachet (or you can make your own from these commonly available household ingredients). It *does* need to be added to clean water, however, which can prove problematic in areas where none is available. 😊 No other single medical discovery of the 20th century has the potential to prevent so many deaths at so little cost. It currently saves the lives of around 1 million children a year.

The Rehydration Project: www.rehydrate.org

Find out how many people have had diarrhoea so far today and how many people have died. Go to www.rehydrate.org/diarrhoea/index.html

It is in the developing world that the impact of diarrhoea is most severe:

1.8 million people die every year from a diarrhoea-related disease (which includes cholera).

90% are children under five.

88% of diarrhoea-related disease is caused by an unsafe water supply, inadequate sanitation and poor hygiene.

Washing one's hands (better personal hygiene) and an improved drinking-water supply would do a great deal to improve the situation.



...with a little sugar and salt

Teach yourself how to rehydrate a child suffering from diarrhoea:

- 😊 **Wash your hands** with soap and water.
- 😊 **Prepare a solution in a clean pot** by mixing one teaspoon of salt and eight teaspoons of sugar with one litre of clean drinking water (boil and then cool the water). Stir until the contents dissolve.
- 😊 **Wash your hands and the child's hands** with soap and water before giving the solution to the child.
- 😊 **Give the child as much of the solution as it needs;** in small amounts.
- 😊 **Give the child alternately other fluids,** such as milk and juice.
- 😊 **Continue to give solids** if child is older than four months.
- 😊 **If the child still needs rehydration after 24 hours,** make up a fresh solution.
- 😊 **If the child vomits,** wait ten minutes and give them more solution. Usually the vomiting will stop by itself.
- 😊 **If the diarrhoea increases or the vomiting persists,** then take the child to a health clinic.