

Diarrhea

VAG LEADER ACTIONS

- Have meetings with your VAG about diarrhea. Use the Diarrhea fact sheets.
- Prepare each VAG meeting properly. At the start of each fact sheet there is a list of preparations needed.
- Use the fact sheet '*Diarrhea, prevention*' in a first VAG meeting on diarrhea, including the two drawings of the fact sheet.
- In another VAG meeting you can use the fact sheet '*Diarrhea, treatment*'.
- Use the fact sheet '*Diarrhea, key information*' in a VAG meeting to discuss all important issues regarding diarrhea once again. If possible copy this fact sheet and give a copy to each family in your VAG as a reminder of important issues regarding diarrhea.
- Write down all actions proposed by the VAG members during the discussions about diarrhea in the VAG meeting reports and stimulate people to really execute these actions.
- Work together with the health and watsan committee. Make plans with them on further actions to be undertaken against diarrhea. Get information from these committees.
- Enter in the monthly VAG numbers report the correct numbers of latrines and tippy taps realized by the households in the VAG.

HEALTH AND WATSAN COMMITTEE ACTIONS

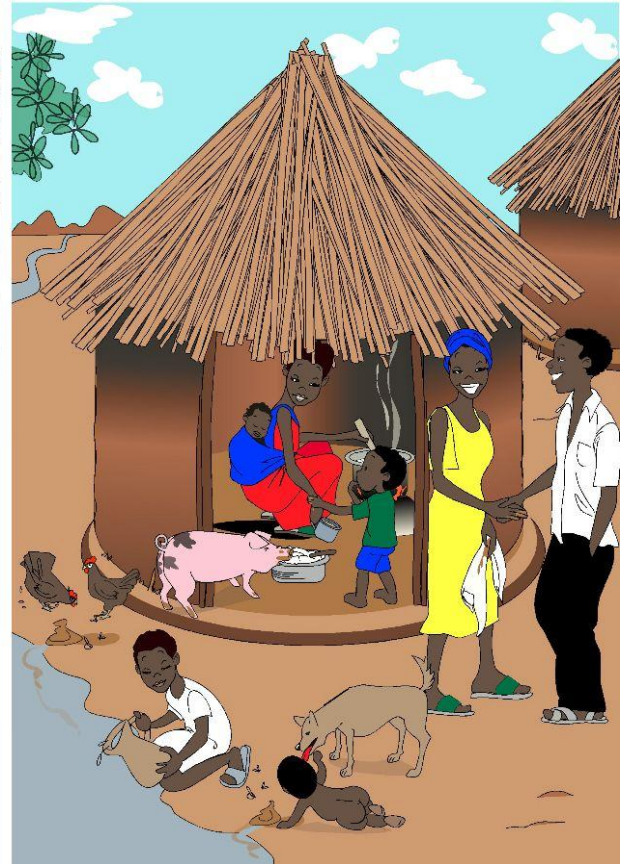
- Investigate where people can get materials for making a latrine slab and tippy tap, which masons they can hire to make a latrine slab or instruct them how to make it themselves, and where they can get the information about how to make a latrine and a tippy tap.
- Inform VAG leaders about these issues so they can pass on the information to their VAG's (including information about the costs of all these things and how to repay loans).
- Investigate what people know and think about diarrhea and what obstacles there are in prevention of diarrhea. Discuss the findings with the VAG Leaders so they can discuss these issues during the VAG meetings about diarrhea.
- Discuss with the VAG leaders who will show people how to make ORS. Probably this can be done by instructing the VAG leaders so they can show it to their VAG as part of the fact sheet '*Diarrhea, treatment*'.
- If necessary beside the meetings and actions by the VAG's the committee members can talk with people about: (a) risks of diarrhea (especially to women and children under 5 years), (b) prevention and treatment of diarrhea.
- Make a strategy to reduce diarrhea together with realization of latrines and tippy taps.
- Evaluate the success of all actions against diarrhea. Look into the following things:
 - Is there an increase in the number of latrines and tippy taps?
 - Do mothers wash their hands after cleaning their baby's bottoms?
 - Do mothers know what diarrhea is and how to prevent it?
 - Do mothers know how to take care of a child with diarrhea and that it needs lots of liquids?
 - Check if the women are breast feeding at least for the first 6 months before starting to provide the children with additional meals
 - Do people wash hands after toilet use and before eating or preparing a meal?
 - Is diarrhea diminishing (ask women and people in the clinic)?
 - Do people go to treat sick people with diarrhea well?
 - Is the numbers of people dying due to diarrhea decreasing compared to other years?
- If success is not enough discuss together what can be done more and take further action.
- Control during the community meetings whether the numbers of latrines and tippy taps realized are correct.

Prevention

Drawing 1 – Faeces everywhere



Drawing 2 – Faeces passed on



What is diarrhea?

(Let the members discuss).

A person has diarrhea when he/she has loose or watery stools.

Why happens to a person who has diarrhea?

(Let the members discuss).

- Diarrhea can make a person very ill or even kill a person by draining too much water from the body.
- Diarrhea can lead to malnutrition as the nutrition leaves the body with the diarrhea.

(show drawing 1)

What do you see in this drawing?

(let the members discuss freely about what they see in the drawing).

The drawing shows people and animals shitting or getting faeces on them.

(show drawing 2)

What do you see in this drawing?

(let the members discuss freely about what they see in the drawing).

The drawing shows how faeces is passed on from animals to food or from people to people, etc. It also shows that water is contaminated by faeces.

Why is faeces dangerous?

(let the members discuss).

Faeces often contains germs that can cause diarrhea. If germs get in our mouth through eating contaminated food or drinking contaminated water, or through a contaminated hand touching your mouth, you will get diarrhea. Flies can also pass on faeces stuck to their legs. In this way they can bring faeces on food or on a person.

Germs are tiny organisms that cause disease. Many diseases, especially diarrhea, come from germs in faeces. People can swallow germs, if these get into water, onto food, onto the hands or on kitchen utensils. Therefore it is very important to dispose of faeces safely so the germs in it can not reach us.

What measures should the family take to prevent diarrhea?

(let the members discuss based on what they see in the drawings).

- The boy should use a latrine.
- The family should not let any animals come into the house.
- Animals should best be kept in a fenced area or shed.
- The family should not let the child play where animals are.
- The mother should wash her hands after cleaning the child's bottom and before preparing food.
- The family should not get drinking water from a contaminated water source or treat or boil the water.
- The mother should cover the food.
- The persons should wash their hands if they get dirty.

See also the fact sheets about livestock keeping, sanitation, food hygiene and drinking water treatment.

Besides the bad hygiene we saw in the drawings, are there any other ways we can get diarrhea?

(Let the members mention anything they believe can cause diarrhea, also if you know they are wrong).

Diarrhea can also be caused by:

- poor nutrition
- food poisoning
- eating too much unripe fruit or heavy, greasy foods
- infection

If people have mentioned causes of diarrhea that are not correct (e.g. witchery, poor social behaviors, etc.), ask the other members whether they feel these ideas are

correct. Try to explain in a respectful way why the mentioned incorrect ideas about causes of diarrhea are wrong (main reason: all types of diarrhea are caused by germs and sometimes by food poisoning or poor nutrition, and not by any other causes).

Besides the measures discussed what other measures can we think of to prevent diarrhea?

(Let the members discuss).

- Throw children's faeces in the latrine or bury it properly.
- Use clean drinking water.
- Wash hands with soap or ashes of the fire before cooking and eating.
- Eat enough healthy and good food.
- Give breast milk alone for the first 6 months of the baby's life (breast milk helps to protect against diarrhea and other illnesses).
- Keep food clean.
- Always warm up left overs before eating them.
- Use a refuse pit.

In our community, are there many cases of diarrhea?

(If the answer is yes, ask the following two questions about the situation in your community.)

What are the main causes of diarrhea in our community?

(Let the members discuss, you can use the drawings to encourage discussion: point at some of the ways diarrhea is spread and ask the members of the group if this happens in the community.)

What can we do to prevent diarrhea in our community?

(Let the members discuss. Write down any action points they decide on in the action list in the VAG meeting report. Be realistic. Do not plan things that are not likely to be achieved!).

Remind the members about the action points they decided on and ask if they feel any other actions should be undertaken as well. Actions you may want to undertake regarding prevention of diarrhea can be:

- *Go around households in the VAG that have a lot of diarrhea and explain them how they can prevent diarrhea.*
- *Build latrines and tippy taps.*

Fill in the VAG meeting report, including all the actions the members have decided to undertake.

Ask if there are any further questions.

Agree on the date, time, place and topic of the next meeting.

Close the meeting.

Treatment

Preparations:

- Bring the materials required for making ORS: teaspoon, salt, sugar, clean water, bowl or container.

How is diarrhea usually treated in our community?

(Discuss the traditional treatment of diarrhea in the community. If there are any ways of treating diarrhea that are not effective or harmful, discuss why they are not good).

How can diarrhea best be treated?

(Let the members discuss)

For most cases of diarrhea no medicines are needed. Do the following things:

- Give ORS solution to drink to the sick person (this prevents dehydration). ORS solution is a mixture of water, salt and sugar which is easily taken up by the body. We will flster this meeting do an exercise on how to make ORS. If ORS is not available give plenty of water to drink.
- Give a person with diarrhea food to get more energy. Diarrhea can lead to malnutrition especially in children. Even if a person or a child with diarrhea has less appetite, he or she must be encouraged to eat as often as possible. Give small amounts of food, that the person likes most.
- When a baby has diarrhea, breast feed it more often.
- A child recovering from diarrhea needs an extra meal every day for at least 2 weeks. This will help the child to catch up on the food "lost".
- In case of cholera and dysentery (person very sick with very heavy watery stools, fever, etc.) the sick person does need medical assistance and medicines fast! See the fact sheet about cholera and dysentery.

What should a person with diarrhea not eat or drink?

- Fatty or greasy foods
- Most raw fruits
- Any kinds of laxatives or purge (laxerende middelen), like
- Highly seasoned foods (heel kruidig eten)
- Alcoholic drinks

If a person who has diarrhea is too sick to eat, what can he/she drink?

- Breast milk
- Gruel's (mixture of cooked cereals and water)
- Fruit juices
- Weak tea
- Clean water
- Oral rehydration salts (ORS) solution.

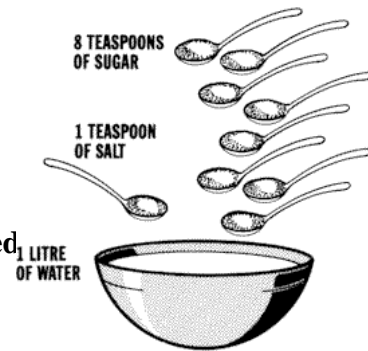
Assignment:

Ask the group if they know what ORS is and if they know how to make it.

If the group does not know, make it with them. Ask for volunteers from the group to help you make the solution. Follow the instructions below to make your own ORS.

ORS**Preparing a 1 litre oral rehydration solution (ORS) using Salt, Sugar and Water****Ingredients:**

- one level teaspoon of salt
- eight level teaspoons of sugar
- one litre of clean drinking/boiled water, then cooled
one litre is about 5 cupfuls (each cup about 200 ml.)

**Preparation Method:**

- Stir the mixture till the salt and sugar dissolve.

If ORS is taken from a package, follow the instructions on the package.

Source www.rehydrate.org

Do we have to take a person with diarrhea to the clinic or hospital?

(Let the members discuss).

A child or an adult has to be brought to the clinic if he or she:

- has a fever
- is extremely thirsty
- vomits frequently
- passes several watery stools in one or two hours
- passes blood in the stool
- if the diarrhea continues for more than two weeks

Some diarrhea diseases such a cholera and dysentery are very dangerous. A person can die from cholera in 2 days if untreated. Therefore it is very important to go to the clinic immediately if a person has severe diarrhea.

Remind the members about the action points they decided on and ask if they feel any other actions should be undertaken as well. Actions you may want to undertake regarding treatment of diarrhea can be:

- *Go around households in the VAG that have a lot of diarrhea and explain them how they can treat diarrhea (you can combine this with explaining people about how they can prevent diarrhea).*
- *Explain people who did not attend the meeting how they can make ORS.*

Fill in he VAG meeting report, including all the actions the members have decided to undertake.

Ask if there are any further questions.

Agree on the date, time, place and topic of the next meeting.

Close the meeting.

Cholera and dysentery

Preparations:

- Bring a household water filter and two water containers.
- Bring chlorine solution.
- Get information where chlorine solution and water filters can be bought and how a loan for buying a water filter can be obtained.

How can you recognize if a person has dysentery or cholera?

Cholera and dysentery are severe forms of diarrhea caused by a bacteria in water. Cholera and dysentery spreads very quickly in emergency conditions and can lead to many deaths. The symptoms are:

- Diarrhea in very large quantities
- Vomiting
- Leg cramps
- Weakness
- Dehydration
- Shock
- Blood or mucus in the feces (only with dysentery)

How can cholera and dysentery best be treated?

(Let the members discuss)

Cholera is a very dangerous disease, as diarrhea in combination with vomiting can lead very quickly to severe dehydration and shock. Without treatment, death can occur within hours.

In case of cholera and dysentery (person very sick with very heavy watery stools, fever, etc.) the sick person does need medical assistance and medicines fast!

Most people with cholera can be helped by oral rehydration alone, but severely dehydrated people may also need intravenous fluids. No matter which method is used, immediate treatment is critical because death from cholera can occur within hours.

To prevent dehydration do the following:

- **Give ORS solution** to drink to the sick person (this prevents dehydration). ORS solution is a mixture of water, salt and sugar which is easily taken up by the body. If ORS is not available give plenty of water to drink.
- **Give lots of liquids to drink** such as a thin cereal, porridge or gruel, soup, water or ORS. This prevents dehydration.
- **Keep giving food.** Give a person with cholera food to get more energy. As soon as the sick person can eat, give frequent feedings of foods he likes. To babies, keep giving breast milk often — and before other drinks.
- In addition to rehydration, people who are severely ill with cholera may benefit from antibiotics.

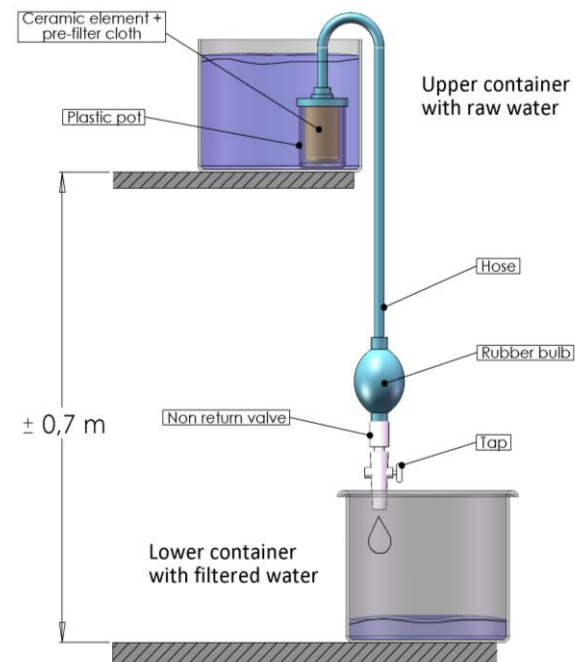
How can cholera best be prevented?

(Let the members discuss)

Purify drinking water is the most important way to prevent cholera. People should only drink disinfected water. You can disinfect water in different ways:

- **Boil your drinking water.** Heat the water and boil it for at least 2 minutes.
- **Use a water filter for filtering the water.** Show the siphon water filter and ask the group if they know how to use it. If the group does not know, show them how to use it. Ask for volunteers from the group to help you. Follow the instructions below:

- Place the upper container about 0.7 meter or more above the lower container.
- Remove the scrub pad from the filter and put the filter back in the plastic pot.
- Put the plastic pot with the filter in the upper container and let it sink to the bottom.
- Open the tap.
- Squeeze the bulb. Wait until it fills up and then press it again. Repeat this until water starts flowing out of the tap.
- The water in the lower container is now filtered and ready for drinking; make sure you use a clean cup!



- **Use a chlorine solution.** Assignment: Ask the group if they know what chlorine is and if they know how to use it. Take a bottle of ///brand name of locally sold chlorine solution/// and chlorinate water with it following the instructions on the bottle.

Other important things to do to prevent cholera are:

- **Use a latrine.** People infected with cholera carry the bacteria in their stools and can pass the disease to others through the fecal-oral route. In order to prevent this risk, don't practice open defecation, but use an improved latrine.
- **Wash your hands regularly.** Frequent hand washing is the best way to control cholera infection. Wash your hands thoroughly with water and soap or ashes, especially before eating or preparing food and after using the toilet.
- **Prepare food in a safe way.** Raw seafood, fruits and vegetables can carry cholera bacteria. This mainly occurs when human feces contaminate the food. Therefore always cover your food, keep uncooked or raw food separate from cooked food, and wash raw fruit and vegetables carefully with purified water.

Do we have to take a person with cholera or dysentery to the clinic or hospital?
(Let the members discuss).

Cholera and dysentery are very dangerous if not treated with ORS right away. A person can die from cholera in 2 days if untreated. Therefore it is very important to go to the clinic if you suspect a person has cholera or dysentery. In the clinic they can provide you with medicines. If you have no possibility to go to a good clinic make sure the person gets a lot of water to drink (clean water if possible, but if you don't have clean water even dirty water is better than nothing). If you can make ORS with

the water this is best otherwise just let the person drink as much as possible. But as soon as possible make sure the patient gets the medicines required for cholera.

What can we do to prevent cholera in our community?

(Let the members discuss. Write down any action points. Actions you may want to undertake regarding prevention of cholera can be):

- *Build latrines and tippy taps*
- *Go around the VAG households to see if they are practicing a method for water purification, and explain them where they can purchase a water filter or chlorine solution or that they otherwise should boil the water they want to drink for at least two minutes.*
- *Teach all the VAG members know how to prepare ORS.*

Fill in the VAG meeting report, including all the actions the members have decided to undertake.

Ask if there are any further questions.

Agree on the date, time, place and topic of the next meeting.

Close the meeting.

Key information

WHAT IS DIARRHEA?

- A person has diarrhea when he has loose or watery stools.
- Diarrhea can make a person very ill and malnourished by draining too much water and nutrition from the body. A child can easily die from diarrhea.

HOW TO PREVENT DIARRHEA

- Always use a latrine.
- Throw children's faeces in the latrine or bury it. Wash hands afterwards!
- Wash your hands with soap or fire ashes before cooking and eating, after cleaning a child's bottom, after toilet use, before and after feeding a baby, and whenever hands are dirty.
- Don't let animals come in the house. Keep them in a fenced area or shed.
- Use only clean drinking water from a safe source, or filter, chlorinate or boil the water. Store drinking water in a clean and safe place and be careful not to contaminate drinking water (touching it with dirty hands)!
- Eat enough healthy and good food.
- Cover the food and keep food always clean.
- Always warm up left overs before eating them.
- Give a baby breast milk and no other food at least during the first 6 months (this helps to protect against diarrhea and other illnesses).
- Use a refuse pit.

Taboos and beliefs may prevent people from feeding children properly or treating a child properly when it has diarrhea. Talk to them about this, especially when the child has diarrhea. Explain what diarrhea is, how to prevent it and what the mother should do to take care of a child with diarrhea.

HOW TO TREAT DIARRHEA

- Drink ORS solution. If ORS is not available drink plenty of safe water.
- Eat a lot of food. Even if the person has no appetite, encourage him to eat often. Give small amounts of food he likes most.
- Provide a child suffering from diarrhea with liquids such as porridge, soup, fruit juice, black tea, ORS and safe water (should be boiled or filtered).
- When a baby has diarrhea, breast feed more often. A baby who is recovering from diarrhea needs an extra meal every day for at least 2 weeks.
- Go to the clinic when there is blood in the diarrhea and whenever the person has a lot of diarrhea.

How to give ORS:

- Give a child under 2 a tea spoonful ORS solution every 1 to 2 minutes.
- Older children should drink a small cup every other while.
- If the child vomits after taking ORS, wait for about 10 minutes then start giving ORS solution again in small quantities.
- If diarrhea continues and you run out of ORS, give clean water to drink while waiting for more ORS.
- The grown ups can also use ORS to treat diarrhea.

WHAT IS DYSENTERY AND CHOLERA

- Cholera and dysentery are severe forms of diarrhea caused by a bacteria in water

HOW TO PREVENT DYSENTERY AND CHOLERA

- Dysentery and cholera can be prevented in the same way as diarrhea, but be particularly careful with drinking water: only drink filtered or purified water!

HOW TO TREAT DYSENTERY AND CHOLERA

- Give plenty of ORS and safe water.
- Seek medical assistance and medicines fast!

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION *///support organization to fill in itself///*

Water filters can be bought in the following places:	
A loan for buying a water filter, a latrine slab or a water point can be obtained as follows:	
Chlorine solution can be bought in the following places:	

