



**MINISTRY OF EDUCATION**

**CHOLERA PREVENTION STANDARD  
OPERATING PROCEDURES FOR  
SCHOOLS AND ALL EDUCATION  
INSTITUTIONS**

**8<sup>th</sup> OCTOBER, 2022**

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## INTRODUCTION

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The Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) shall be used by both public and private schools and all academic institutions in an effort to prevent Cholera outbreaks. The SOPs will be reinforced by regular monitoring and supervision by relevant authorities and it is expected that all schools and stakeholders shall adhere to the same.

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## CHOLERA ETIOLOGY

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Cholera is caused by a highly mobile, gram-negative bacterium, *Vibrio cholerae*.

By 7<sup>th</sup> October, 2022, confirmed number of cases since the onset of the outbreak is 4,107 with 116 deaths registered.

The **Cholera incubation period** is very short, 2 hours to 5 days; however, infected people can carry and transmit the bacteria for 4 weeks.

*Vibrio cholerae* is ingested through water or food contaminated with faeces

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## CHOLERA SYMPTOMS

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- Acute watery diarrhoea
- Profuse vomiting
- Profuse, 'rice water' stools (common)
- No fever
- No abdominal cramps
- Leg cramps (common)

- Dehydration including loss of body weight, renal failure and death.

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### **CHOLERA TRANSMISSION:**

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Cholera is transmitted via faecal-oral route as follows:

- **Contaminated drinking water:**
  - Unprotected shallow wells, surface water. (*Vibrio cholerae can live for years in some aquatic environments*)
  - When contaminated utensils/hands come in contact with stored water
- **Through contaminated food during and after preparation:**
  - Contaminated food stuff stored and served at room temperature or inadequately heated
  - Cooked food left standing and moist at room temperature is an excellent medium for Vibrio
- **Through contaminated fruits and vegetables when grown at or near ground level:**
  - Fertilized with human waste
  - Irrigated with water containing human waste
  - Freshened with contaminated water
  - Eaten raw, not thoroughly washed.

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## **STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES (SOPS)**

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- The school/institution should be alert for even a single case or a rumour of a suspected case in the catchment area
- Refer to the nearest health facility any cases of watery diarrhoea at the school/institution
- Report any confirmed cholera cases to the relevant education authorities
- Monitor learner attendance everyday
- Carry out Health Education at the school/institution in liaison with health personnel using the school assembly
- Display cholera messages (symptoms, transmission and prevention) in all strategic places at the school/institution
- Carry out general hygiene inspection among the learners every day before classes
- Promote early health-seeking behaviour among learners and all stakeholders at the school/institution

### **Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) Practices**

- Observe WASH practices, such as:
  - Sanitation improvement
  - Proper management of solid waste
  - Place handwashing points at strategic places e.g. outside toilets, classrooms, administration blocks and cafeteria.

- Proper washing of hands with soap and safe water regularly including the following critical times:
  - before cooking
  - before eating
  - after using the toilet
  - after cleaning a baby's bottom or cleaning a potty
  - before and after taking care of a sick person.
- Chlorinate water using 1% stock solution prepared by Health personnel.

### **Food Safety and Hygiene Practices**

- Institute food safety and hygiene practices, such as:
  - Banning the sale of food items in all primary and secondary school premises
  - Ensuring that food vendors and suppliers in Universities and Colleges are oriented and adhere to the SOPs
  - Ensuring that cooks observe personal body hygiene when preparing, cooking and serving food
  - Washing hands with soap and using safe water before preparing, cooking and serving meals
  - Eating cooked food while it is still hot
  - Covering all food to prevent flies from contaminating it
  - Washing dishes and utensils with soap and safe water

- Washing chopping boards or surfaces thoroughly with soap and safe water
- Using chlorine to clean toilet floors
- Covering pit latrine holes with a lid
- Washing fruits with safe water and freshly peeled before eating
- Avoiding contact between raw and cooked or ready to eat foods.

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## **CONCLUSION**

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These SOPs are not exhaustive. Cholera is a deadly disease. It is the mandate of the Ministry of Education (MoE) to periodically review and revise, where necessary, the SOPs, as advised by the Ministry of Health for a well-coordinated and smooth Cholera response in schools and all educational institutions. The Ministry will from time to time commission monitoring and supervisory missions to schools to strengthen SOPs adherence.



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