

Sanitation, Hygiene & Disease Prevention

Stopping diarrhoea, cholera and infections when water and toilets are limited.

Wash your hands

Wet hands, use soap, scrub all parts (backs, between fingers, nails) for 20 seconds, rinse, dry in air or with a clean cloth. If you have no soap, ash or sand with water is better than water alone.

- ☐ After using the toilet
- ☐ After cleaning a child or changing a nappy
- ☐ Before preparing food and before eating
- ☐ Before feeding a child
- ☐ After caring for a sick person
- ☐ After touching waste or animals

Emergency toilets

- Build latrines at least 30 metres from wells, springs and rivers, and downhill from them.
- The bottom of the pit must be at least 1.5 metres above the ground water level.
- Cover waste with soil or ash after each use. Keep a lid on the pit. Put a handwashing point next to it.
- No toilet? Use a bucket lined with a bag, cover each use with soil, ash or sawdust, and bury or dispose of it far from water.
- Make toilets safe for women and children: lockable, lit at night, near the shelter.

Cholera and diarrhoea

DANGER Lots of watery diarrhoea ('rice water'), vomiting and weakness can kill within hours. Start oral rehydration solution immediately and go to a health centre.

- Drink only treated water (see Safe Water pack).
- Cook food well and eat it hot. Peel fruit yourself.
- Wash hands with soap often.
- Clean surfaces and toilets with a bleach solution: 1 part household bleach (5%) to 50 parts water.
- Wash clothes and bedding of sick people separately, with soap and hot water if possible.

Safe food

- ☐ Cook thoroughly, especially meat, fish and eggs
- ☐ Eat food while it is hot; do not keep cooked food for later without cooling
- ☐ Keep food covered from flies
- ☐ Wash utensils with safe water and soap
- ☐ Keep raw and cooked food apart

Waste and insects

- Keep rubbish in closed bags or bins, away from living and water areas. Bury or burn it in a safe place if there is no collection.
- Remove standing water where mosquitoes breed (tyres, buckets, cans). Use mosquito nets.
- Plan menstrual supplies: pads, reusable cloths and a private place to wash and dry them.

Caring for a sick person at home

- One person cares for the sick person if possible. Wash hands before and after.
- Keep the sick person's cup, plate and towel separate. Ventilate the room.
- Wear gloves or use a plastic bag on your hand when touching vomit or stool; clean with the bleach solution.
- Get medical help for difficulty breathing, confusion, inability to drink, or a high fever that does not go down.



Get the free HAVEN survival app

Survival guides, offline maps, family plan, checklists and an offline AI assistant on your phone. Works without internet or signal. More free printable guides online.

havensurvival.com

Sources:

- WHO: Hand hygiene; CDC: Handwashing
- Sphere Handbook 2018: WASH minimum standards (spherestandards.org)
- WHO: Cholera fact sheet and cholera outbreak response
- WHO / UNICEF: Oral rehydration salts and management of diarrhoea

Important: General information only. Not a substitute for trained medical help or official instructions. Always follow local authorities and emergency services.

HAVEN Survival Pack P08 · Version 1.0 · October 2026 · English · Free to print, copy and share for non-commercial use. Please keep this page intact, including the havensurvival.com credit.