

Funeral and burial recommendations for deaths from acute watery diarrhea/cholera

- When a person with acute watery diarrhea (AWD)/cholera dies, their body releases fluid that can contain large amounts of germs that can easily spread and infect other people in the community and other communities if someone travels after a funeral
- Special care should be taken to prepare and handle the body for burial and during a funeral so others do not get ill with AWD/cholera.
- If possible, family members should not handle the body
- Local officials or a health care worker should be contacted immediately and the burial should be supervised by local officials

Handling bodies in the home

If the body must be prepared at home for burial, follow these steps to help prevent the spread of cholera.

Handling the body:

- Family members, friends, and neighbours should not kiss, touch or hold the body.
- When closing the eyes and mouth of the body, straightening the arms and legs or handling the body in any way, use gloves or wash hands with soap and water immediately after.
- During the procedure to wash the body, use a solution 0.2% chlorine solution*. Use gloves while washing the body. If no chlorine is available, wash the body away from water sources and wash hands after.
- When applying perfume, rubbing the body with cloth or wrapping the body before burial, use gloves or wash hands immediately after. While bandaging the head, try to make sure the mouth remains shut.
- Educate both women and men in the community on body cleaning and preparing procedures.
- Do not empty the intestines of the corpse.
- Fill the mouth and bottom (anus) with cotton that has been soaked in a 0.2% chlorine solution*.
- Put the body in a bag or wrap in plastic sheeting to prevent fluids from leaking. These fluids could spread cholera.
- Wash hands well with soap and safe treated running water (not a bowl) after touching or preparing the body.
- After handling the body, disinfect gloves in a 0.2% chlorine solution* and leave to dry in the sun.

Disinfecting the household:

- Clean all of the deceased person's clothing and bedding with 0.05% chlorine solution* and soak for 15 minutes. If household bleach is not available, clean bedding and clothing by washing with soap and drying in the sun. If possible, stir bedding and clothing in boiling water before washing (do not wash clothing in, or close by water sources).
- Disinfect mattresses by drying well in the sun.
- Clean any surfaces (table top, vehicle, etc.) the body touched with a 0.2 chlorine solution* and leave to dry in the sun
- Wash hands well with soap and safe water immediately after handling the clothes of the deceased.

A lower chlorine concentration (0.2%) is advised for washing the body at the household level than at the health centre (2%). This is because the much stronger concentration of 2% is more difficult to handle at the household level and there is a risk of burning hands, eyes, etc.

***SEE REVERSE FOR HOW TO MAKE A CHLORINE SOLUTION**

During the funeral and burial: at the mosque, in transit and at the burial site

Funerals are potential sites where AWD/cholera can be transmitted. If someone from the funeral travels to a community not yet infected, then this community is now at risk for cholera. This can be a mode of spreading the disease throughout the country.

- ☑ The deceased should be buried within hours of their death.
- ☑ The funeral should be held as close as possible to where the person died.
- ☑ If a vehicle is used to transport the body, disinfect the vehicle with 0.2% chlorine solution.
- ☑ Corpse carriers should wear gloves.
- ☑ It is best to have a health care worker or local official help with the burial.
- ☑ Touching, kissing, or holding the body should be avoided.
- ☑ Funeral feasts should be cancelled. If there is a feast and food is prepared, the same person that is handling or touching the body should not be preparing the food. No one should touch the body during a funeral feast.
- ☑ Ensure that there is no hand shaking at the funeral.
- ☑ Give hygiene education to all mourners.
- ☑ All mourners should wash hands thoroughly with soap/ash and under clean running water.
- ☑ Disinfect all surfaces that have been in contact with the body with 0.2% chlorine solution.
- ☑ Do not bury the body within 50m of a water source.

Handling bodies in the Health Centre

- ☑ Disinfect corpse with a strong 2% chlorine solution (note this is only effective for a short period of time, therefore the family should bury the deceased as soon as possible).
- ☑ Plug the mouth and anus of the body with cotton wool soaked with 2% chlorine solution.
- ☑ Bandage the head so that the mouth remains shut.
- ☑ Wrap the body carefully and put in a body bag. If not available, the body can be wrapped in plastic sheeting or a cloth sheet soaked in 2% chlorine solution.
- ☑ Disinfect all surfaces that have been in contact with the body with 0.2% chlorine solution.
- ☑ Wash gloves and hands thoroughly with 0.05% chlorine solution or soap.
- ☑ Take time to explain to relatives the importance of the above body procedures done to the deceased

HOW TO MAKE A CHLORINE SOLUTION

	0.05%	0.2%	2%
HTH (70% active chlorine)	1 table spoon in 20 litres of water	1 table spoon in 5 litres of water	2 table spoons in 1 litre of water
Bleach (5%)	14 table spoons in 20 litre of water or ¼ cup in 20 litres of water	20 table spoons in 5 litres of water	2 cups in one litre
Use	Washing hands and clothing (soak for 15 minutes) disinfecting dead bodies at home level	Disinfecting of latrines, floors, kitchen utilities of patient etc	Disinfecting dead bodies in CTC

Note: one cup is 200ml, One tablespoon is 10ml