

CHOLERA

Cholera is an infection that can cause severe diarrhoea. It's not found in the UK, but there's a very small risk of getting it while travelling in some parts of the world.

You can get cholera from:

- drinking unclean water
- eating food (particularly shellfish) that's been in unclean water
- eating food that's been handled by an infected person

The risk of getting it while travelling is very small.

Cholera can cause digestive problems such as severe diarrhoea and vomiting. It increases your risk of dehydration, which can be fatal.

How is cholera treated?

Treatment for cholera includes drinking plenty of fluids or getting intravenous fluids to prevent dehydration. Healthcare providers also sometimes prescribe (antibiotics like doxycycline, erythromycin or azithromycin to help you feel better.

Providers also treat kids between the ages of 6 months and 5 years with zinc supplements.

Antidiarrhoeal medicines aren't recommended for cholera and could make symptoms worse.

Here are things you can do to help avoid getting ill while travelling in areas where cholera is found.

- wash your hands with soap and water regularly, especially after using the toilet and before preparing food or eating
- only drink bottled water or tap water that's been boiled
- brush your teeth using bottled or boiled water

Vaccination for cholera

There's a vaccine for cholera, but most people do not need it. It's usually only recommended if either:

- you're travelling to an area where cholera is common and you'll be visiting remote places without access to medical care

- you're an aid or disaster relief worker going to an area where a cholera outbreak is likely

The vaccine is given as a drink. For adults, 2 doses (given 1 to 6 weeks apart) can provide protection for up to 2 years.

The vaccine is given as a drink and is licensed from children 2 years and over.

Before the appointment: Avoid eating, drinking, and if possible taking medication for one hour before your appointment.