



## Salem/Cumberland County Health Department

# CHOLERA

(PUBLIC HANDOUT)

### **What is cholera?**

Cholera is a diarrheal illness caused by infection of the intestine with bacteria. The infection is often mild without symptoms, but sometimes can be severe.

### **What are the symptoms of cholera?**

About 1 in 20 people infected with cholera will have severe reactions noted by the following symptoms:

- Profuse watery diarrhea
- Vomiting
- Leg cramps

Those who experience these symptoms rapidly lose body fluids which lead to dehydration and shock. Without treatment, death can occur within hours.

### **How is cholera spread?**

A person may get cholera by drinking water or eating food contaminated with the bacteria that causes cholera. In an outbreak, it usually spreads through the feces of infected people. The disease can spread rapidly in areas with a lack of treatment of sewage and drinking water.



## Salem/Cumberland County Health Department

# CHOLERA

(PUBLIC HANDOUT)

The bacteria that cause cholera also live in the environment in certain rivers and coastal waters. Therefore, eating raw shellfish can spread cholera to people.

### **What should travelers do to avoid getting cholera?**

The risk for cholera is very low for U.S. travelers visiting areas that have a high number of cholera cases. When simple precautions are observed, contracting the disease is unlikely.

All travelers to areas where cholera has occurred should observe the following recommendations:

- ✓ Drink only water that you have boiled or treated with chlorine or iodine. Other safe beverages include tea and coffee made with boiled water and carbonated, bottled beverages with no ice.
- ✓ Eat only foods that have been thoroughly cooked and are still hot, or fruit that you have peeled yourself.
- ✓ Avoid undercooked or raw fish or shellfish, including ceviche.
- ✓ Make sure all vegetables are cooked and avoid salads.
- ✓ Avoid foods and beverages from street vendors.
- ✓ Do not bring perishable seafood back to the United States.



Salem/Cumberland County Health Department  
**CHOLERA**  
(PUBLIC HANDOUT)

**Is there a vaccine for cholera?**

At the present time, the sale of the only cholera vaccination in the United States has been discontinued. It has not been recommended for travelers because of the brief and incomplete immunity the vaccine offers. No cholera vaccination requirements exist for entry or exit in any country.