Transmission

- Unwashed hands (after defecating or using a toilet)
- Food or water contaminated by stools from a sick person
- Contaminated fruits and vegetables
- Close physical contact with a sick person

Symptoms

- Diarrhoea containing blood.
- Fever, abdominal cramps.
- Dehydration.

Prevention

- Promote safe clean drinking water (including a clean covered water container in the household)
- Use appropriate sanitation facilities (sound, clean latrines)
- Promote handwashing with soap (especially after using the toilet or cleaning a baby)
- Promote good food hygiene (thoroughly cooked food, covered food, clean utensils, etc.)
- Encourage exclusive breastfeeding for the first six months of life
- Social mobilization and behaviour change communication

Vulnerable people

- Children under five years old
- Children who are malnourished
- People, especially children, with weakened immune systems (for example, as a result of HIV infection)
- People living in areas with poor water, sanitation and hygiene facilities and services
- Elderly people

If an epidemic occurs

- Initiate community-based surveillance
- Detect cases and refer them to health facilities
- Provide oral rehydration (ORS)
- Promote good food hygiene (thoroughly cooked food, covered food, clean utensils, etc.)
- Encourage breastfeeding, including when the baby or child is sick
- Promote safe, clean water (including a clean, covered water container in the household)
- Promote use of appropriate sanitation facilities (sound, clean latrines)
- Promote handwashing with soap (especially after using the toilet or cleaning a baby)
- Increase social mobilization and behaviour change communication
Community-based assessment - questions

Make a map of the community and mark the information you gather on the map. Record other details.

- When did people start to fall sick with diarrhoea?
- How many people have fallen sick with bloody diarrhoea? Where?
- How many people have died from bloody diarrhoea? Where? When?
- How many people live in the affected community or area?
- How many children under five years of age live in the affected area?
- Who and where are the vulnerable people?
- Are children in the affected community generally well nourished?
- Do people always have enough food?
- How common is breastfeeding?
- Where do people obtain their drinking water? Is the source safe?
- Do people know how to treat water? How do they do it?
- What sanitation facilities (including communal latrines) are available? Do people use them?
- What handwashing facilities are available? Do they have soap?
- Where are the local health facilities and services? (Include traditional and community carers.)
- What are the community’s habits, practices and beliefs about caring for and feeding sick people? When babies and infants are sick, do women continue to breastfeed them?
- Is a social mobilization or health promotion programme in place?
- What are the community’s habits, practices and beliefs about hygiene, sanitation and water?
- Which sources or channels of information do people use most?
- Are rumours or is misinformation about bloody diarrhoea spreading in the community?
- Can people identify the signs and symptoms of dehydration?
- Do people know how to make oral rehydration solution (ORS)? Do they have resources at hand to make it?

Volunteer actions

See the following action tools for more information on what actions to take against acute bloody diarrhoea:

1 - Community-based surveillance
2 - Community mapping
3 - Communicating with the community
4 - Referral to health facilities
5 - Volunteer protection and safety
7 - Assessment of dehydration
9 - Preparing an oral rehydration solution (ORS)
10 - Giving oral rehydration solution (ORS)
12 - Managing fever
13 - Breastfeeding
19 - Psychosocial support (Psychological first aid (PFA))
29 - Hygiene promotion
30 - Clean, safe household water
31 - Good food hygiene
32 - Sanitation
32 - Assainissement
33 - Building and maintaining latrines
34 - Handwashing with soap
39 - Preparing and using disinfectants
43 - Social mobilization and behaviour change