

A chart for treating diarrhoea in children for Health Centre workers in Nigeria. Colour lithograph by Enugu State Ministry of Health, ca. 2000.

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ALGORITHM FOR DIARRHOEA TREATMENT AT THE HEALTH CENTRE

This is designed to help health workers manage children with diarrhoea correctly and efficiently. It provides you with information on what to do step by step (in the form of a chart) when a mother brings her sick child with diarrhoea to the health centre.

Specific colours have been assigned to various steps in the chart: **Pink, Yellow and Green.**

- A classification in a **pink** row means the child's condition is severe and needs urgent attention and referral or admission for inpatient care.
- A classification in a **yellow** row means the child needs a specific medical treatment. Treatment includes teaching the mother how to give the oral drugs at home. The health worker advises her about caring for the child at home and when she should return to the centre.
- A classification in a **green** row does not require specific medical treatment such as antibiotics or other treatments except Vitamin A. The health worker teaches the mother how to care for her child at home. For example, you might advise her on giving home fluids to her sick child.

1 ASSESS AND CLASSIFY THE SICK YOUNG INFANT AGE 1 WEEK UP TO 2 MONTHS ASK: DOES THE YOUNG INFANT HAVE DIARRHOEA?

<p>If yes ask:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> For how long Is there blood in the stool? <p>Look and feel:</p> <p>Look at the young infant's general condition.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Is the infant lethargic or unconscious? Restless and irritable? <p>Look for sunken eyes</p> <p>Pinch the skin of the abdomen.</p> <p>Does it go back:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Very slowly (longer than 2 seconds) Slowly 	For dehydration	With two of the following signs: • Lethargic or unconscious • Sunken eyes • Not able to drink or drinking poorly • Skin pinch goes back very slowly	SEVERE DEHYDRATION	If child has no other severe classification: Give fluid for severe dehydration or if child also has another severe classification: Refer URGENTLY to hospital with mother giving frequent sips of SSS on the way. Advise mother to continue breastfeeding. If child is over 2 years old and there is cholera in your area, give antibiotic for cholera.
		With two of the following signs: • Restless, irritable • Sunken eyes • Skin pinch goes back slowly	SOME DEHYDRATION	Give fluid and food for some dehydration. If infant also has POSSIBLE SERIOUS BACTERIAL INFECTION Refer URGENTLY to hospital with mother giving frequent sips of SSS on the way. Advise mother to continue breastfeeding.
		Not enough signs to classify as some or severe dehydration	NO DEHYDRATION	Give fluids to treat diarrhoea at home.
	If diarrhoea lasts 14 days or more	Diarrhoea lasting 14 days or more	SEVERE PERSISTENT DIARRHOEA	If the young infant is dehydrated treat dehydration before referral unless the infant also has POSSIBLE SERIOUS BACTERIAL INFECTION. Refer to hospital.
	If blood in stool	Blood in the stool	DYSENTERY	Give the first dose of appropriate antibiotic. Refer urgently to hospital.

2 ASSESS AND CLASSIFY THE CHILD AGE 2 MONTHS UP TO 5 YEARS ASK: DOES THE CHILD HAVE DIARRHOEA?

<p>If yes ask:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> For how long If child has diarrhoea lasting for 14 days or more in the last 3 months Has the child 3 or more episodes in the past month? Is there blood in the stool? <p>Look and feel:</p> <p>Look at the child's general condition.</p> <p>Find out if the child is:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lethargic or unconscious Restless and irritable? <p>Look for sunken eyes</p> <p>Offer the child fluid. Is the child:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Not able to drink or drinking poorly Drinking eagerly, thirstily <p>Pinch the skin of the abdomen.</p> <p>Does it go back:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Very slowly (longer than 2 seconds) Slowly 	For dehydration	With two of the following signs: • Lethargic or unconscious • Sunken eyes • Not able to drink or drinking poorly • Skin pinch goes back very slowly	SEVERE DEHYDRATION	If child has no other severe classification: Give fluid for severe dehydration or if child also has another severe classification: Refer URGENTLY to hospital with mother giving frequent sips of SSS on the way. Advise mother to continue breastfeeding. If child is over 2 years old and there is cholera in your area, give antibiotic for cholera.
		With two of the following signs: • Restless, irritable • Sunken eyes • Drinks eagerly, thirstily • Skin pinch goes back slowly	SOME DEHYDRATION	Give fluid and food for some dehydration. If child also has a severe classification: Refer URGENTLY to hospital with mother giving frequent sips of SSS on the way. Advise mother to continue breastfeeding. Advise mother when to return immediately follow-up in 5 days if not improving.
		Not enough signs to classify as some or severe dehydration	NO DEHYDRATION	Give fluid and food to treat diarrhoea at home. Advise mother when to return immediately follow-up in 5 days if not improving.
	If diarrhoea lasts 14 days or more	Dehydration present	SEVERE PERSISTENT DIARRHOEA	Give VFA and multivitamin. Treat dehydration before referral unless the child has another severe classification. Refer to hospital.
		No dehydration	PERSISTENT DIARRHOEA	Give Vitamin A and multivitamin. Advise the mother on feeding a child who has PERSISTENT DIARRHOEA. Follow-up in 5 days. Assess for possible symptomatic HIV infection.
	If diarrhoea lasts more than 14 days in past 3 months or child has 3 or more episodes in the past month	Diarrhoea lasting 14 days or more in past three months or child has more than 3 episodes in the past month	PAST PERSISTENT OR RECURRENT DIARRHOEA	Assess for possible symptomatic HIV infection.
	If blood in stool	Blood in the stool	DYSENTERY	Treat for 5 days with an oral antibiotic recommended for Shigella in your area. Follow-up in 2 days.

