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ORT is the giving of fluid by mouth to prevent and/or correct the dehydration that is a result of diarrhoea. As soon as diarrhoea begins, treatment using home remedies to prevent dehydration must be started. If adults or children have not been given extra drinks, or if in spite of this dehydration does occur, they must be treated with a special drink made with oral rehydration salts (ORS). The formula for ORS recommended by WHO

treated with a special drink made with oral rehydration salts (ORS). The formula for ORS recommended by WHO and UNICEF contains:

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- 2.9 gms trisodium citrate dihydrate (or 2.5 gms sodium
- 1.5 gms potassium chloride
- 20 gms glucose (anhydrous)

The above ingredients are dissolved in one litre of clean water. WHO has recently recommended a change in the complete formula, replacing 2.5 gms of sodium bicarbonate with 2.9 gms of trisodium citrate dehydrate. The new formula gives the packets a longer shelf life and is at least as effective in correcting acidosis and reducing stool volume. Packets containing sodium bicarbonate

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Acute diarrhea normally only lasts a few days. ORT does not stop the diarrhoea, but it replaces the lost fluids and essential salts thus preventing or treating dehydration and reducing the danger. The glucose contained in ORS solution enables the intestine to absorb the fluid and the

salts more efficiently. ORT alone is an effective treatment for 90–95% of patients suffering from acute watery diarrhoea, regardless of cause. This makes

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Packets of oral rehydration salts are widely available. To use one of these packets, mix the contents with 1 quart or liter of drinking water. If drinking water is not available, or if you are not sure the water is drinkable, boil the

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If ORS packets are not available, mix an oral rehydration solution using one of the following recipes; depending

Recipe for Making a 1 litre ORS solution using Sugar, Salt and Water

Clean Water – 1 litre – 5 cupfuls (each cup about 200 ml.)

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Can the solution be made with dirty water?

The benefits of fluid replacement in diarrhoea far outweigh the risks of using contaminated water to make oral rehydration solution. In situations where it is difficult to boil water, mothers are advised to use the

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The hospital is designed to provide highly specialized care in various departments with a focus on multi-organ transplantation. Prof. Mohammed Rela, a world renowned surgeon in the field of Liver surgery and transplantation is the Chairman and Managing Director of the Institute.

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Department of
Gastroenterology

**Diarrhoea, Dehydration,
Oral Rehydration Salts**

Diarrhoea, Dehydration,

1 What is diarrhoea?

Diarrhoea is an intestinal disorder characterized by abnormal fluidity and frequency of fecal evacuations, generally the result of increased motility in the colon; may be an important symptom of such underlying disorders as dysenteric diseases, lactose intolerance, GI tumors, and inflammatory bowel disease. Diarrhoea is the passage of watery stools. This means body fluids and salts can be quickly lost from the body. The child becomes dry (dehydrated) and this is very dangerous

2 Why is diarrhoea dangerous?

When a person gets diarrhoea, the body begins to lose a lot of water and salts – both of which are necessary for life. If the water and salts are not replaced fast, the body starts to "dry up" or get dehydrated. Severe dehydration

3 What is dehydration?

Dehydration is the loss of water and body salts through diarrhoea. The human body needs water to maintain enough blood and other fluids to function properly. If your body loses substantially more fluids than you are drinking, you become dehydrated. You may lose fluids in

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Along with the fluids, your body also loses electrolytes, which are salts normally found in blood, other fluids,

4 The usual causes of dehydration are a lot of diarrhoea and vomiting. Dehydration can also occur if you do not eat or drink much during an illness or if you do not drink enough during or after strenuous exercise. Medications that cause fluid loss to control excess body fluid

cause. Although anyone can become dehydrated, those who become dehydrated the most easily are:

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- people in hot climates.

5 Early features are difficult to detect but include dryness of mouth and thirst Symptoms of early or mild

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- dizziness made worse when you are standing
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- sleepy or irritable
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- dry mouth, dry tongue; with thick saliva.
- rapid and deep breathing – faster than normal
- fast, weak pulse

Symptoms of moderate to severe dehydration include :

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- fainting
- severe muscle contractions in the arms, legs, stomach,
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- sunken dry eyes, with few or no tears
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- lack of elasticity of the skin (when a bit of skin lifted up stays folded and takes a long time to go back to its

6 If you are mildly dehydrated, you need to drink enough liquid to replace the fluids you have lost. Also, you need to replace the electrolytes (salts) you have lost. Drinking sips of water slowly, along with eating the typical American diet, which is high in salt, will replace fluids and salts you have lost. Nonprescription medicines are available that help replenish fluids and electrolytes. You can also replace both fluids and electrolytes by drinking sports drinks or an oral rehydration solution (ORS).

Drink the solution (or give it to the dehydrated person if he or she is conscious) immediately. Do not wait until

7 What if symptoms of dehydration begin to

The child should be taken quickly to the nearest health post, or station where prepacked ORS is available. The trained health worker will then show the parents how to mix ORS and supervise giving it. The health worker should also be able to assess a child who is severely dehydrated who needs hospital treatment (including IV if necessary). During the time before the complete ORS can be started the home-prepared solution should continue to be given. In the unfortunate event that complete formula ORS is unavailable the home-prepared solution will have to be used instead BUT it is not as effective for the TREATMENT of dehydration. Only in a minority of countries, such as some of the more affluent ones and some other mostly fairly small countries with easy communications, is prepacked ORS recommended as the exclusive treatment both for preventive, first-line treatment in the hoe and for treatment of dehydration. In most countries, home-prepared solutions are the recommendation for prevention and complete formula ORS for treatment, as

8 How long will the effects of dehydration last?

If dehydration is not treated, it can cause death. If it is