

## What To Do When You Have Diarrhoea



### HIV/AIDS QUALITY OF CARE INITIATIVE (HAQOCI)



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Diarrhoea is caused by many factors. Infections, changes to the lining of the intestines, the nervous system, medication and stress can all play a role. The biggest immediate problem with diarrhoea is loss of water or dehydration. In the long run it can lead to malnutrition.

- ⌘ Drink lots of fluid to replace the water that is lost this way. You will need about 8 cups of fluid per day or more. Water is good, but soups and fruit juices (especially apple, pear, peach, apricot and grape, thin mealie meal porridge, mahewu, magada) will supply more energy and Vitamins. Sweetened cold drinks will supply extra energy.
- ⌘ Some salts are lost with diarrhoea and this can be replaced by eating certain vegetables and fruit. Bananas, grapes, pineapple, apricots, peaches, tomatoes and potatoes are good sources of potassium.



- ⌘ Drink sugar and salt solution (750ml of clean water, 6 level teaspoons sugar and half a level teaspoon salt)
- ⌘ Drink liquids between meals rather than with meals to prevent thirst.
- ⌘ Sometimes foods that contain lots of **fat** can make the diarrhoea worse. If this is a problem, decrease your intake of cream, bacon, sausage, cheese, oil (used for frying chips or eggs) peanut butter, butter and margarine. Remember that fat in the diet is a good energy source, and if you already have a poor intake, you do not want to cut it out of your diet unless it is really necessary.
- ⌘ If you have persistent diarrhoea, try to decrease your intake of milk and dairy products.
- ⌘ The sugar found in milk is called lactose and in HIV infection your gut has problem digesting it. Not only milk, but milk powder, ice cream, instant puddings, milk drinks and milk soups may need to be avoided for a while. Sour or fermented dairy products are often better tolerated. These include yoghurt and other sour milk products like lacto.

- ⌘ Select foods that are easily digested and absorbed. Peeled and cooked fruit and vegetables might be tolerated better.
- ⌘ Eat starchy foods such as white rice, pasta, bananas and mealie-meal porridge or sadza.
- ⌘ Eat small meals every few hours rather than three large ones.
- ⌘ Avoid foods that have a laxative effect such as prunes. This is a well-known example. (The response to fruit is very individual).
- ⌘ Avoid food and beverages that contain caffeine or alcohol. This includes wine, beer, coffee, tea, carbonated drinks and chocolate.
- ⌘ In case of severe or persistent diarrhoea, it may help to reduce certain type of fibre in your diet. Avoid whole wheat bread, raw vegetables, the skins of fruit, nuts, seeds dried beans and peas. Very green and unripe fruit could be a problem.
- ⌘ It should be all right to eat cooked oats, peeled pears, apples, peaches and apricots, mangoes and paw-paws.

***If diarrhoea persists for more than a few days, seek advice from health workers. There are medications that can help. You might have infection that needs treatment.***