
Facilitator Guide

for

***Management of the Patient
with Diarrhoea***

MANAGEMENT OF THE PATIENT WITH DIARRHOEA

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Detailed Guidelines For

Management Of The Patient With Diarrhoea

1. MAKE PREPARATIONS FOR PARTICIPANTS TO COMPLETE THIS MODULE

To prepare to work through this module, you should:

- * Arrange for participants to visit a health centre where they can watch a health worker assess and treat a child with diarrhoea, and then treat children by themselves. Print 4-5 copies of the Diarrhoea Case Record Form (pages 61-63 in the module) for each participant to use at the health centre.
- * Obtain ORS packets, clean drinking water, containers, litre measure, other measures, spoons, glasses, and scissors.
- * Ask participants to bring to class a copy of the form used by their health workers to record information on each patient who comes for a service or treatment (such as a page from the patient register or an individual patient record).

2. INTRODUCTION OF MODULE

Explain that an important aspect of managing a patient with diarrhoea as described in this module is treating dehydration with oral rehydration therapy and feeding. This treatment does not stop diarrhoea, but reverses the dehydration which causes most diarrhoea-related deaths. Further explain that proper management of diarrhoea also includes maintaining good nutrition.

The module also emphasizes the role of mothers and other family members in treating diarrhoea in the home.

Describe each annex to the module. Mention that there are notes in the module that say when to refer to those annexes.

3. EXERCISE A - GROUP DISCUSSION

Part 1.0 of this module recommends practices for educating family members about prevention and home treatment of diarrhoea. Find out what practices are common in the participants' health areas. Discuss each of the questions listed in Exercise A. Record participants' answers on a flipchart.

When discussing current local practices, point out those that are helpful (for example, giving liquids) and those that are harmful (for example, starving children with diarrhoea). Discuss what is the best time to meet with mothers to talk about home treatment of diarrhoea. Stress the need to keep messages simple, and to show (rather than simply tell) mothers about recommended practices. Discuss ways to do this, for example, demonstrating how to mix ORS solution, or using a picture of a child who is dehydrated to show signs of dehydration.

4. EXERCISE B - INDIVIDUAL FEEDBACK

Remind the participant that it is important to know the age of a child when fever is present. This is because if the child is under 2 months of age the treatment of fever is different than if the child is 2 months of age or older. Explain that the treatment of fever and other problems included in the section of the chart titled, "THEN, FOR OTHER PROBLEMS," will be covered in more detail later in the module.

5. EXERCISE C - GROUP DISCUSSION

During the group discussion, have participants examine the photographs one at a time, and ask them to identify the visible signs of dehydration.

Explain that participants should keep these pictures to remind them of the visible signs of dehydration and to train health workers to recognize the signs.

6. EXERCISE D - GROUP DISCUSSION

For this exercise, you should have clean drinking water, ORS packets, scissors, a litre measure or container marked with volume measurements, and containers used in the local area. Also have glasses or cups for tasting the solution and a spoon.

Have 2 different participants mix ORS solution. Let more participants try if supplies permit. Vary the exercise if possible. For example, ask one participant to use a cup or glass rather than a litre measure to measure a litre of water into a large unmarked container.

To help participants think about how ORS solution will be mixed in their own health areas, discuss their answers to the questions in item 4 on page 29 in the module.

When you are finished discussing this exercise with the participants, explain that in the next few pages of the module there are 5 Short-Answer Exercises. Ask them to let you know when they have completed those exercises. Encourage them to ask questions about the short-answer questions as necessary.

7. PREPARATION FOR EXERCISE E - EXPLANATION TO GROUP

When the participants have completed the Short-Answer Exercises on pages 31-46, ask them if they have any questions about the exercises. Briefly discuss the answers with them.

When you finish discussing the Short-Answer exercises, do the following to be sure the participants understand the DIARRHOEA MANAGEMENT CHART.

- * Review with participants how to use the table "First, Assess Your Patient for Dehydration." Mention that usually the signs on the table will develop more or less together. For example, if several signs are in column C, the remaining signs are likely to be in column B, not A. However, since the signs are subject to different interpretation by different health workers, they may sometimes fall in all sections of the chart. If the health worker uses the chart correctly (i.e., uses the key signs), this subjectivity will not matter. The chart can be trusted.
- * Suggest that since mothers are being taught a lot in Plan A, a health worker might find it practical to do part of the plan with the mothers on an individual basis and part with the mothers together in a group. For example, teach the amount of fluid to give to each child individually. Explain to a group of mothers how to make the fluid.
- * Emphasize the importance of the feeding instructions in Plan A and for children with persistent diarrhoea. Point out that children on Plan A need an extra meal each day for 2 weeks while children who have had persistent diarrhoea need an extra meal each day for at least a month.
- * Point out that for Plan B, the ORS solution is given during a period of 4 hours.
- * When participants use Plan C to determine how much IV fluid to give, they must multiply the number of millilitres (ml) by the number of kilograms of body weight. For example, an infant weighing 8 kilos needs 240 ml (30 x 8) of Ringer's Lactate within the first hour.
- * Emphasize the importance of giving Plan C patients some ORS solution by mouth as soon as possible, in addition to giving IV fluids.
- * Review with the participants how to identify and treat the problems listed in the box titled "For Other Problems" on the chart.
- * Review the "Use of Drugs" box of the chart.

Suggest that participants take a break before beginning Exercise E.

8. EXERCISE E - INDIVIDUAL FEEDBACK

When providing feedback on Case 1, stress the importance of the mother giving breast milk freely between sips of ORS solution.

Be sure the participant's answers for Case 2, part e, includes liquids and foods available in his local area.

Lati (Case 4) is severely malnourished. Explain that severe malnutrition makes some of the signs of dehydration misleading. (For example, the child may always have sunken eyes and be irritable or lethargic; the skin pinch may always go back slowly.) Assessment and treatment of the severely malnourished child is very complicated. The child must be referred to a hospital for care and nutritional management.

9. EXERCISE F - ROLE PLAY

Before the role play

Gather the supplies for the role play:

- * A doll (or a substitute) to be the child
- * DIARRHOEA MANAGEMENT CHART
- * For Part 1 of the role play, ORS solution (already mixed in Exercise D)
- * For Part 2 of the role play, ORS packets, water, spoon, and containers for measuring and mixing

Select 4 participants to be in the role play. One will play the role of a mother (or father) and one will play a health worker in Part 1. The other 2 will play the mother and the health worker in Part 2. (This will give more participants a chance to practice.) Explain the roles and give the participants time to prepare. The health worker will need to arrange his supplies.

Take the participant aside who will be the mother. Encourage the participant to act like a normal, concerned mother. Suggest that she could ask for some medicine to stop the diarrhoea. Or, she could become alarmed when Lura vomits some of the solution.

To conduct the role play--Part 1

To the group, explain the purpose of the role play: to focus on how a health worker interacts with a mother. The participants in the role play and the ones observing should focus on the interaction more than on the content of what the health worker says. Of course, the content is very important also. When health workers are fully trained, the content of what they say is expected to be complete and accurate.

Remind the rest of the participants that they should observe closely so that they can comment on what was done well and what could be improved.

Discussion of Part 1

When the mother is successfully giving ORS solution, stop the role play and lead a discussion of it.

Ask the observers to comment:

- * What did the health worker do well?
- * Did the health worker leave out anything important?
- * Were appropriate words used for the mother to understand the instructions?

Ask the mother to comment:

- * Did you understand what the health worker was telling you?
- * Did the health worker answer your questions and deal with your concerns?

Continuing the Role Play - Part 2

Ask the other two participants to be the mother and the health worker and continue the role play. Review the current situation so that everyone understands what treatment plan will be followed now that Lura has improved.

Note: Part 2 focuses on how to teach parents to treat their children's diarrhoea at home. The health worker must do a thorough job of teaching Plan A to the parent. He should use the ORS packets, water, and other supplies to teach the mother to make ORS solution.

Discussion of Part 2

When the role play is finished, thank the participants. Then lead a discussion of it.

Ask the observers to comment:

- * What did the health worker do well?
- * Did the health worker leave out anything important?

Ask the mother to comment:

- * Did you understand what the health worker was telling you?
- * Did the health worker answer your questions and deal with your concerns?

Ask the observers whether they think this mother, or the previous one, learned all of the points or just heard them. How can they tell? What can health workers do to be sure that mothers understand and will remember?

10. EXERCISE G - INDIVIDUAL FEEDBACK

Some of the participants may use more than one type of form for recording information, for example, an individual patient record and a register book. Tell these participants to draw or attach only the form that records the minimum data needed (as described on page 54).

As you review each participant's form(s), keep the following points in mind:

- * Is it clear what information should be recorded?
- * Does the form include all the necessary data?
- * Does the form include some data which may not be necessary? If you think so, ask the participant to explain why the data is being recorded.
- * If the participant has indicated that many changes in the form are needed, ask him if it will be possible to make them. If not, ask which ones he thinks can be made.

Remind participants that if they supervise facility health workers and community health workers, they should review both types of forms to be sure the necessary data is collected.

If participants spend too much time drawing the form, tell them that they only need to include the major headings found on the form, not every detail.

11. EXERCISE H - INDIVIDUAL FEEDBACK

Refer to Annex 7 on pages 85-86 in the module when discussing this exercise with each participant. During your discussion:

- * Check to see that each participant's ORT corner/treatment area will encourage (rather than discourage) mothers to stay as long as needed for treatment of dehydration. For example, be sure mothers will be out of the way of other activities, comfortably seated, and in a well-ventilated room.
- * Check to see that the participant's ORT corner/treatment area has the necessary furniture and supplies. If it does not, discuss with the participant what he can do to obtain the furniture and supplies.

When reviewing the suggestions in the Annex for location and arrangement of the ORT corner, explain to the participant that even if there is not a separate "ORT corner" and all types of patients must be treated in the same outpatient treatment area, there needs to be a place to sit with a table where the mother can stay while she gives ORS solution to her child. The mother might be able to sit outside in a shaded place where a health worker can check on her periodically.

13. EXERCISE I - VISIT TO A HEALTH CENTRE

Before the visit

Be sure that each participant has 4-5 copies of the Diarrhoea Case Record Form to take to the health centre.

Explain to participants that the purpose of the visit is for each of them to practice assessing and treating children with diarrhoea.

Ideally each participant will be assigned one child to assess and treat. If there are a limited number of cases, participants will be asked to work in pairs or groups of three.

During the visit

How you organize the exercise at the health centre will depend on how many patients are available and how many participants are in your group. You can assign participants singly or in pairs to each available patient. If it is not possible for participants to treat the patients, you should ask them about the treatment that they would give. Participants should fill in a Diarrhoea Case Record Form for each patient they treat or observe being treated.

Tell participants to explain to the mothers of the patients what they will be doing and why, to ask for the mothers' cooperation, and to thank them.

During the exercise, be sure every participant actually assesses and treats a patient and no one just stays in the background, hesitating to get involved. Watch closely and provide individual feedback. Give encouragement and advice as needed.

After the visit

Discuss the visit with the participants in your small group. Include the following in your discussion:

- * What was difficult or particularly interesting when you or others assessed or treated patients?
- * Was treatment given to cases according to the DIARRHOEA MANAGEMENT CHART? If not, how was it given? Was the treatment effective?
- * What signs of improvement did you observe after cases were treated?
- * Were clear instructions, including feeding instructions, given to the mother?
- * Also discuss any questions that participants noted on their case record forms.

14. SUMMARY OF MODULE

Review the points below and any additional points that you listed in the box on the next page.

- * If diarrhoea occurs, the family can successfully treat the child in the home by giving plenty of food and by increasing fluids.
- * Mothers and other family members should be able to recognize the signs that mean the child should be brought to a health centre or community health worker.
- * Using the DIARRHOEA MANAGEMENT CHART, the health worker can assess whether a child brought for treatment of diarrhoea is dehydrated, and whether he has problems other than dehydration (for example, dysentery, severe malnutrition). He can then select appropriate treatment based on his assessment, and either give that treatment or refer the child to someone who can.
- * Dehydrated children need oral rehydration therapy. In extreme cases, they need IV therapy accompanied by oral therapy as soon as possible.
- * Patients who have loose stools with blood have dysentery and require treatment with antibiotics.
- * The health worker should be able to educate mothers and other family members about proper home treatment for diarrhoea, including what types and how much fluid and food to give a child with diarrhoea, how to mix ORS solution, and signs that the child should be brought to a health worker.
- * This module is an introduction to the management of patients with diarrhoea. It takes practice, with guidance from an experienced person, to learn to assess cases and treat diarrhoea correctly and confidently. The participants should try to find ways to get additional experience before they train health workers in their health facility. For example, they might work for a few days at another facility where ORS solution is used, or attend a clinical training course where treating patients is the main activity.

**ADDITIONAL POINTS TO TELL PARTICIPANTS ABOUT
MANAGEMENT OF THE PATIENT WITH DIARRHOEA ARE:**

A large, empty rectangular box with a black border, intended for participants to write down additional points regarding the management of a patient with diarrhoea.