

Cholera



Distribution

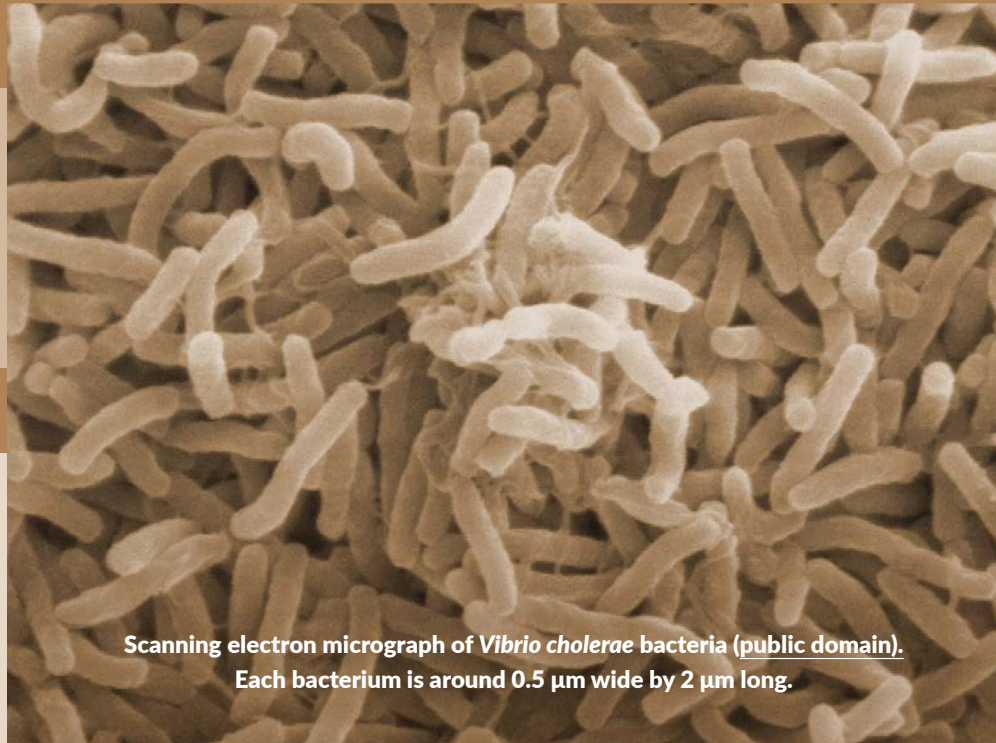
Most common in low-income countries with limited access to adequate sanitation and safe drinking water. Each year there are 1.3–4 million cases and 21,000–143,000 deaths due to cholera (WHO, 2017).



Cause

Consuming water or food contaminated with *Vibrio cholerae* (bacteria).

People become infected by eating food or drinking water containing pathogens from feces.



Scanning electron micrograph of *Vibrio cholerae* bacteria (public domain).
Each bacterium is around 0.5 µm wide by 2 µm long.



Symptoms

Watery diarrhea, often combined with nausea and vomiting. Severe, untreated cholera can lead to dehydration and death.

Some people who are infected have no symptoms or only experience mild diarrhea, but their feces can still make other people sick.



Prevention

- Treat and safely store all drinking water.
- Wash fruits and vegetables in safe drinking water; cook food thoroughly.
- Use improved latrines to keep feces from the environment.
- There are vaccines for cholera. They do not provide full immunity, but can help prevent the spread of disease.

HOUSEHOLD WATER TREATMENT OPTIONS

- Filters and disinfection methods that are rated "very effective" for bacteria.
- During a cholera outbreak, chlorine is promoted as the best option.



Treatment

Most people can recover in 3-6 days. If dehydrated from diarrhea, drink oral rehydration solution. In severe cases, intravenous fluids may be required.