

# 2 Preparing oral rehydration solution (ORS)

## OVERVIEW



Oral rehydration solution (ORS) is the first way to treat people suffering from diarrhoea and dehydration.

ORS can be prepared either from packets of ORS or at home from water, sugar and salt.

## What you need to KNOW

- ➔ ORS comes in little packets in the form of a powder, which needs to be diluted before use.
- ➔ ORS packets can be found at your local National Society branch, at a health centre or in the cholera kit (see *Action tool 6*).
- ➔ Follow the instructions on the packet to find out how much water is needed to dilute the contents of each packet.
- ➔ Always use clean water to dilute ORS (see *Action tool 8*).
- ➔ If the ORS is not completely used up by the end of the day, get rid of it and prepare a new batch in the morning. Do not keep for more than 24 hours.

## Preparing and administering ORS

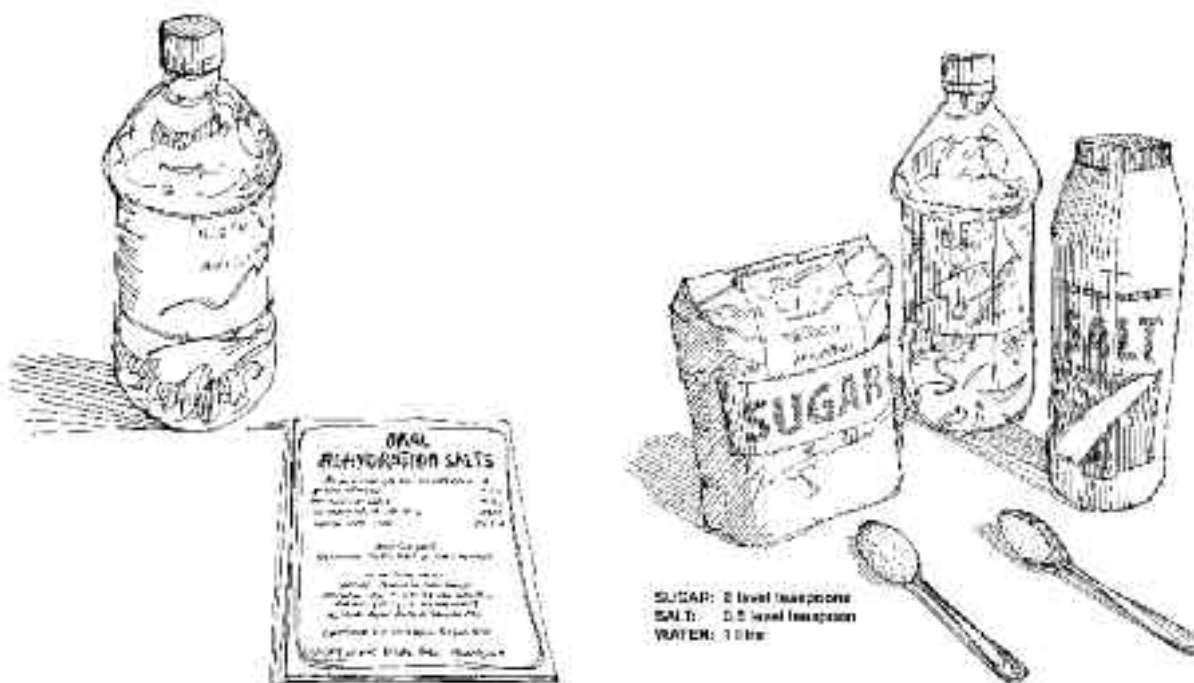
1. Wash hands with soap and clean water.
2. Pour all the powder from 1 packet of ORS into a clean container that will fit at least 1 litre of liquid.
3. Pour 1 litre (or amount indicated in the instructions) of the cleanest water available into the container and mix it with the powder.
4. Give frequent sips from a cup or a spoon (especially for young children) until the patient is no longer thirsty.
5. If the patient vomits, tell the caregiver and wait 10 minutes before giving more.
6. You can add ½ cup of orange juice or a mashed banana to the solution to make it taste better.

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## ORS at home

- ➔ Traditional remedies make highly effective ORS and are suitable ways to prevent a child from losing too much liquid because of diarrhoea. Tell mothers about them if there are no ORS packets available.
- ➔ Traditional remedies include: breast milk, gruel (a mixture of cooked cereals diluted with water), carrot soup and rice water.
- ➔ A very simple and effective solution for rehydration of a child can be made using salt, sugar and water (see illustration below).
- ➔ You will need to teach mothers to make the solution and dissolve it using the cleanest available water.
- ➔ You can add ½ cup of orange juice or a mashed banana to the solution to make it taste better.



*Preparing an oral rehydration solution*