



INSTITUTE FOR
INTERNATIONAL
MEDICINE

Oral Rehydration Solution (ORS)

Diarrhea is usually a self-limited illness that resolves in three to four days with adequate rehydration. The greatest danger is the loss of liquid and nutrients from a child's body, which can cause dehydration and malnutrition.

What is ORS? A special combination of dry salts mixed with safe water. It can help replace the fluids lost due to diarrhea.

When should ORS be used? When a child has three or more loose stools in a day. In addition, for 10–14 days, give children over 6 months of age 20 milligrams of zinc per day (tablet or syrup); give children under 6 months of age 10 milligrams per day (tablet or syrup).

Where can ORS be obtained? In most countries, ORS packets are available from health centers, pharmacies, markets and shops.

Ingredients added to 1 liter of drinking water:

- Sugar - 30 ml (6 level teaspoons)
- Salt - 2.5 ml (1/2 level teaspoon)

Be very careful to mix the correct amounts. Too much sugar can make the diarrhea worse. Too much salt can be extremely harmful to the child.

Making the mixture a little too diluted (with more than 1 liter of clean water) is not harmful.

Other needed supplies:

- Mixing bowl one liter
- Measuring cup
- Spoon for mixing
- Drinking cups
- Towel for cleaning spills