



# 09. Preparing oral rehydration solution (ORS)

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## Overview

- Oral rehydration solution (ORS) is the first step in treating 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 small packets in the form of a powder. It needs to be diluted before use.
- ORS packets can be obtained at your local National Society branch, at a health centre, or in the community oral rehydration point (see Action tool [Community oral rehydration points](#)).
- 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 [Clean, safe household water](#)).

## Preparing and administering ORS

1. Wash hands with soap and clean water.
2. Pour all the powder from one sachet of ORS into a clean container that will hold at least one litre of liquid.
3. Pour one litre (or the amount indicated in the instructions) of the cleanest water available into the container and mix it with the powder.
4. Give the patient frequent sips from a cup or spoon until he or she is no longer thirsty. (A spoon is especially suitable for young children.)
5. If the patient vomits, tell the caregiver and wait ten minutes before giving more.
6. You can add half a cup of orange juice or a mashed banana to the solution to make it taste better.
7. If ORS is still needed after 24 hours, make a fresh solution.
8. If the patient does not improve or signs of severe dehydration appear, take the patient to a health clinic.

## ORS at home

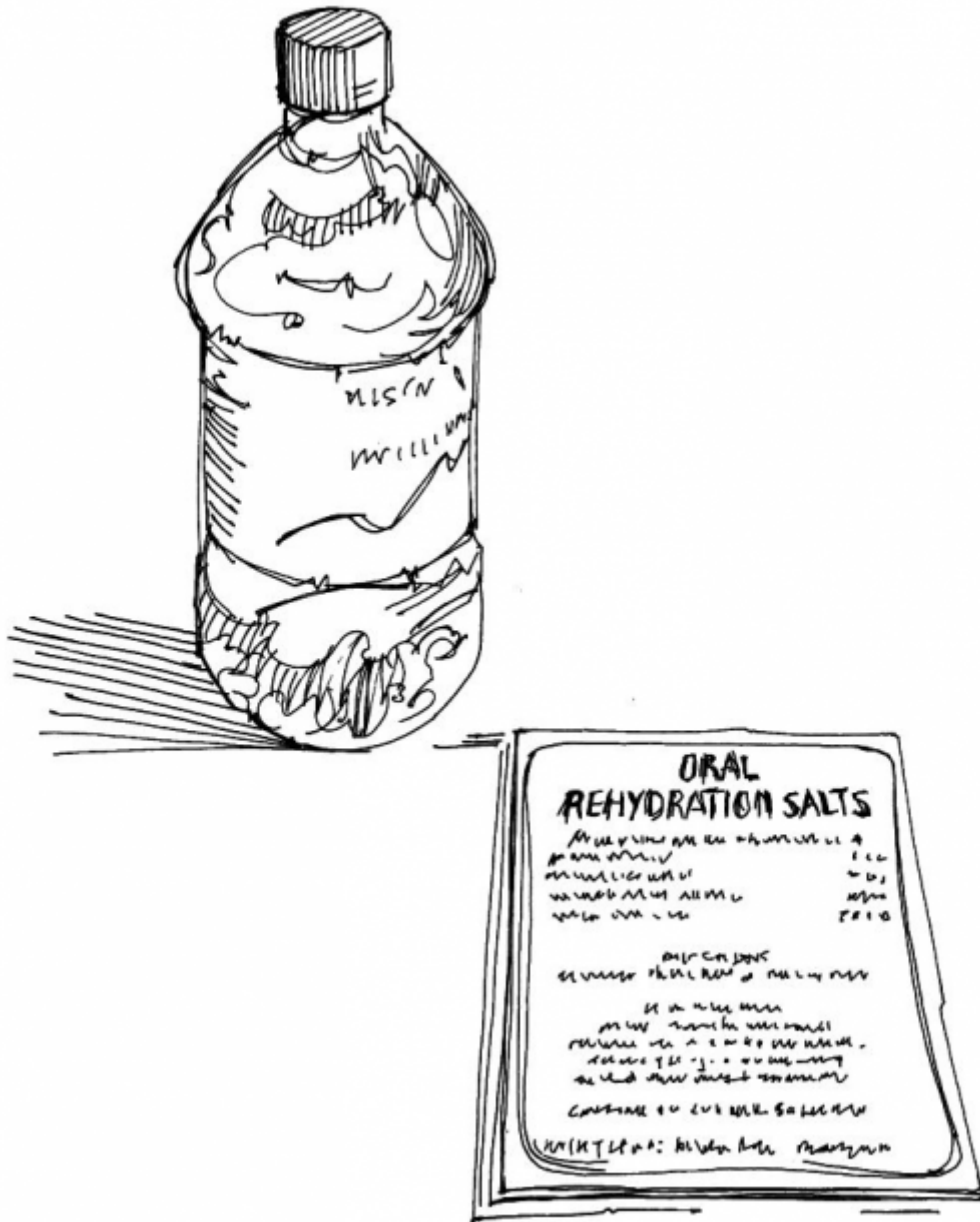
- Some traditional remedies can be an effective ORS and can prevent a child from losing too much liquid through diarrhoea. Tell caregivers about effective traditional remedies if ORS packets are not available and a health facility is inaccessible.
- Traditional remedies include: breast milk, gruel (cooked cereals diluted with water), carrot soup and rice water.
- A very simple and effective solution for rehydrating a child can be mixed from salt, sugar and water (see illustration below).
- A home-made salt and sugar solution should only be used when ORS packets are not available.
- If a home-made salt sugar solution is used, you need to teach caregivers to make the solution safely and correctly. They need to avoid mistakes in the mix of ingredients. It is also important to use the cleanest

available water.

- You can add half a cup of orange juice or a mashed banana to the solution to make it taste better.

### **Home-made salt sugar solution**

1. Wash your hands with soap and water before preparing the solution.
2. In a clean container mix:
  - One litre of safe water.
  - Half a small spoon of salt (3.5 gms).
  - Four big spoons (or eight small spoons) of sugar (40 gms).
3. Stir the salt and the sugar until they dissolve in the water.
4. Give the patient frequent sips from a cup or a spoon until he or she is no longer thirsty. (Spoonfuls are especially appropriate for young children.)
5. If the patient vomits, tell the caregiver and wait ten minutes before giving more.
6. You can add half a cup of orange juice or a mashed banana to the solution to make it taste better.
7. If ORS is still needed after 24 hours, make a fresh solution.
8. If the patient does not improve or signs of severe dehydration appear, take the patient to a health clinic.



## Community messages



01. Preparing and giving oral rehydration solution

(ORS)