



Diarrhoea is defined as passage of liquid or watery stools. These watery stools are usually passed more than three times in a day. Passage of even one large watery motion among children can be labelled as diarrhoea. Normally there are three types of diarrhoea:

- Acute watery diarrhoea starts suddenly and may continue for a number of days but not more than 14 days. Most of these are self-limiting and will last for three to seven days.
- Dysentery is diarrhoea with visible blood in stools.
- Persistent diarrhoea begins acutely but is of unusually long duration i.e. lasting more than 14 days.

Diarrhoeal diseases are a major cause of death and disease among children under five years. Majority of the deaths in diarrhoea are due to dehydration (loss of water and minerals).

Four golden rules to observe if a child has diarrhoea

- If the child is breastfed, continue breast-feeding more frequently.
- If the child has started consuming other foods, continue feeding small quantities of these items.