

# Cholera Treatment Centre

A Cholera Treatment Centre (CTC) is a specialised isolation ward designed to manage and treat cholera patients and prevent the spread of the disease. In cholera outbreaks around the world, MSF rapidly sets up these centres to combat and contain infection.

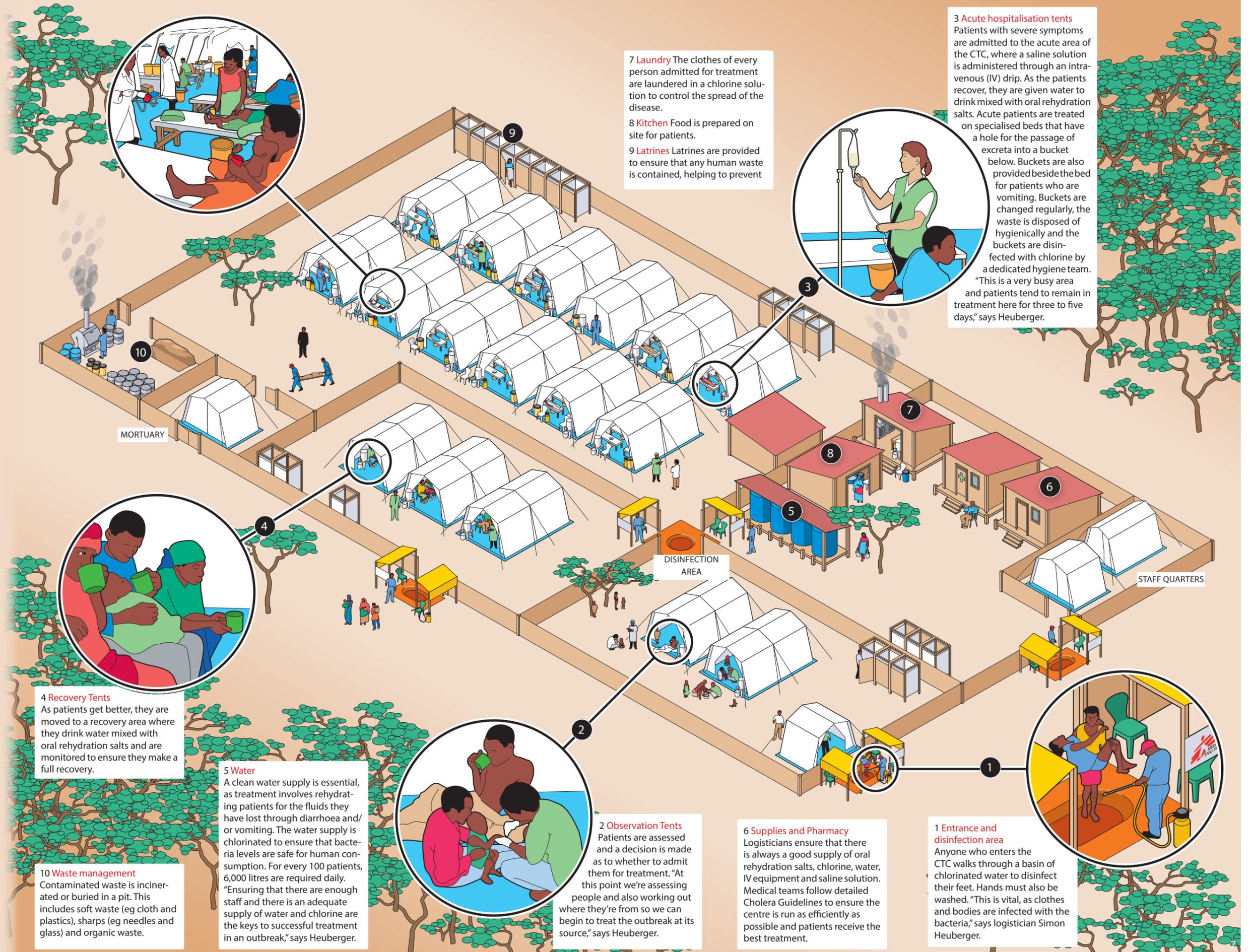
Treating cholera is a race against time. The onset of the disease is abrupt, with profuse diarrhoea and vomiting resulting in severe dehydration that can kill infected people within hours. Although it is an easily curable disease, it is vital that cases are detected and treated in a CTC as early as possible.

## Race against time

In the CTC, patients are given an oral rehydration solution that works to replace the massive amount of fluids and salts lost due to the disease. During this period, patients are isolated to prevent the further spread of infection.

In 2017, a cholera epidemic spread across the war-torn country of Yemen. MSF quickly responded to control the spread of the disease, treating more than 103,000 patients.

MSF nurse Ruth Conde was working at the centre of Yemen's cholera epidemic. "It doesn't matter if you're rich or poor, male or female, old or young, cholera is indiscriminate," she says.



**7 Laundry** The clothes of every person admitted for treatment are laundered in a chlorine solution to control the spread of the disease.

**8 Kitchen** Food is prepared on site for patients.

**9 Latrines** Latrines are provided to ensure that any human waste is contained, helping to prevent

**3 Acute hospitalisation tents** Patients with severe symptoms are admitted to the acute area of the CTC, where a saline solution is administered through an intravenous (IV) drip. As the patients recover, they are given water to drink mixed with oral rehydration salts. Acute patients are treated on specialised beds that have a hole for the passage of excreta into a bucket below. Buckets are also provided beside the bed for patients who are vomiting. Buckets are changed regularly, the waste is disposed of hygienically and the buckets are disinfected with chlorine by a dedicated hygiene team. "This is a very busy area and patients tend to remain in treatment here for three to five days," says Heuberger.

**4 Recovery Tents** As patients get better, they are moved to a recovery area where they drink water mixed with oral rehydration salts and are monitored to ensure they make a full recovery.

**5 Water** A clean water supply is essential, as treatment involves rehydrating patients for the fluids they have lost through diarrhoea and/or vomiting. The water supply is chlorinated to ensure that bacterial levels are safe for human consumption. For every 100 patients, 6,000 litres are required daily. "Ensuring that there are enough staff and there is an adequate supply of water and chlorine are the keys to successful treatment in an outbreak," says Heuberger.

**10 Waste management** Contaminated waste is incinerated or buried in a pit. This includes soft waste (eg cloth and plastics), sharps (eg needles and glass) and organic waste.

**2 Observation Tents** Patients are assessed and a decision is made as to whether to admit them for treatment. "At this point we're assessing people and also working out where they're from so we can begin to treat the outbreak at its source," says Heuberger.

**6 Supplies and Pharmacy** Logisticians ensure that there is always a good supply of oral rehydration salts, chlorine, water, IV equipment and saline solution. Medical teams follow detailed Cholera Guidelines to ensure the centre is run as efficiently as possible and patients receive the best treatment.

**1 Entrance and disinfection area** Anyone who enters the CTC walks through a basin of chlorinated water to disinfect their feet. Hands must also be washed. "This is vital, as clothes and bodies are infected with the bacteria," says logistician Simon Heuberger.