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Cholera cases go up in Accra

Just when it is assumed that cholera outbreak has been brought under check, the Ghana Health Service (GHS) has recorded two cases of cholera in the Greater Accra Region for the first quarter of the year.

According to the Regional Health Directorate, as at December 2012, the country had a total of 2,487 cholera cases with 26 deaths recorded.

This was however an improvement over previous year's record of 6,882 cholera cases with 48 deaths.

The Director of the GHS, Dr Ebenezer Appiah-Denkyira, said in a statement copied to the DAILY GUIDE that the statistics depict the need to intensify public education to avoid possible outbreak.

He said the acute bacterial enteric disease caused by vibrio cholerae characterized by profuse painless diarrhoea and vomiting can be contracted through risk factors like poor personal, food and sanitation hygiene, floods leading to contaminated domestic water source, break down water pipes and waste disposal system and eating cold food.

He said eating contaminated, raw fruits and vegetable foods without washing them properly with safe water, using waste water to irrigate fruits and vegetables, drinking contaminated water and attending to a person who has the cholera disease and not washing hands properly with soap and running water are ways the sickness is transmitted.

"Touching materials or objects that are contaminated with germ, house flies carrying germs from infected stool which is not properly disposed off, if hands are not properly washed before eating, cooking, after visiting toilet and attending to someone who has the disease are the mode of transmission," he said.

Dr Appiah-Denkyira said a person can know he has contracted the disease when there are sudden onset of profuse painless watery stools, occasional effortless vomiting, rapid dehydration, severe muscle cramps, weak pulse and cold clammy skin.

He therefore encouraged the public to wash their hands with soap under running water before eating, cooking, after visiting toilet and after shaking hands.

"Wash all fruits and vegetables thoroughly with salty water/vinegar before eating, wash all plates and cooking utensils thoroughly with soap and running water before and after use, eat food whilst hot, avoid buying/eating food which is exposed to flies and dust, food sellers should cover their food against dust and flies, use proper toilet facility and avoid passing stools anywhere and keep the environment clean," he said.

Dr Appiah-Denkyira noted that education is ongoing at Out Patients Departments (OPDS) of hospitals and clinics, churches media organizations.

He said health facilities have been well equipped with personnel and logistics to treat all cholera cases adding that treatment if free thus persons experiencing diarrhoea and vomiting should be rushed immediately to the nearest health facility.

"Information has been given to stakeholders on the current situation and their expected roles to play. We want stakeholders such as the media, waste management and Water Works to help in the management and prevention of cholera," he said.

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