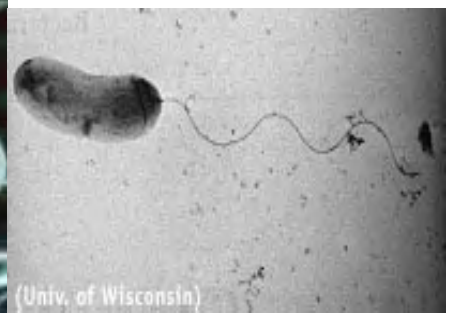
Cholera

Chlora is an infection in the small intestine caused by the common shaped bacterium *Vibro Cholerae.*
It infects your small intestines, causing severe diarrhea, vomiting and leg cramps.You usually get Cholera by swallowing contaminated food or water.

Most of the time people become infected by the bacteria or a diesaster, this is a real danger, since regular food and water supplies are usually unavailable.The diesease can spread even further by people using alrady infected water to wash in, drink from, and use as a toilet.Epidemics usually begin from cases like this.
Cholera has been known in Northeast India for centuries, where outbrakes regulary occur.In the 19th century with the opening of trade routes and the increase in Muslim and Hindu pilgrimages, cholera spread throughtout the world,causing millions of deaths in epidemics.

During the first half of the 20th centuary cholera was confined to Asia but in 1960 the seventh pandemic spread from Indonesia to the rest of Asia, Africa and the Meditteranean coast.In 1993 a new strain of Cholera, 0139, was identified in Bangladesh as a cause of, potentially the eighth pandemic.Immunity from earlier strains didn't seem to protect against this new one.



A few cases of Cholera occur in the UK.It usually appears mainly among travellers who have been on holiday to Africa, Asia etc.Occasionally outbrakes occur on the Meditteranium borders where the victim has eaten a shellfish, which seem to be capable of harbouring the cholera bacterium.

Symptoms

Cholera can be mild or even without symptoms, but a severe case can lead to a painful death.

It starts suddenly, between one and five days after infection, with diarrhoea, often accompanied with vomiting.More than 500ml of fluid could be lost each hour in the diarrhoea and if it isn't replaced, it might cause death!

The fluid loss is brought on by the action of a toxin produced by the bacterium that largely increases the passage of fluid from the bloodstream into the large and small intestines.

Treatment

In a few cases Cholera can be treated by drinking large amounts of water mixed in with suger and other salts and vitamins that the body requires.Without enough fluid in your body you would dehydrate and die of shock in a few hours.If this method is used as soon as possible fewer than 1% of cholera patients die according to the CDC.

The treatment above is very effective, howeverif dehydration develops despite fluid replacement by mouth, the patient may be given extra fluid by intravenous infusion.Antibiotics, espicially tetracycline can shorten the period of diarrhoea and infectiousness.With rehydration the patient usually has a full recovery.However in major epidemics that happen after natural diesasters, ther may be insufficient supplies of clean water or so many people may have been affected that few are left to nurse the sick.

Prevention

Worldwide cholera is controlled by improving peoples way of life.

eg.

- By ensuring that sewage is not allowed to contaminate the fresh water supplies.

Plus they should resrict themselves to only boil the water before they drink it and only by bottled water from reliable sources.There is also a vaccine that provides some protection against the the diesease wich is

advisable if you are going to Africa.It gives short lived protection lasting only 6 months and the precautions with water must still be taken.

By Steffie Syme