Diarrhea is dangerous.

Diarrheal disease is a major cause of death and illness in children under five years. Repeated illnesses in children contribute to a vicious cycle of malnutrition and infection that can cause irreversible physical and cognitive stunting. Diarrheal disease limits potential for children, their families, and entire communities.

How can you prevent diarrhea?

First, expand your knowledge! We know what works.

**Vaccines:** Immunize infants and young children against harmful pathogens like rotavirus

**Water:** Drink and use safe, clean water

**Breastfeeding:** Exclusively breastfeed infants for the first six months

**Sanitation:** Use a safe, hygienic toilet or latrine and properly dispose of diapers and other human waste

**Nutrition:** Ensure young children have a nutritious, balanced diet

**Handwashing:** Practice good hygiene and encourage young children to wash their hands (with soap and clean water), especially when preparing food and after using the toilet

How can you treat diarrhea?

If a child falls sick: Treat them immediately with oral rehydration solution (ORS) and zinc. Be sure the child gets both—as they work best together.

Every child deserves a chance to reach their full potential. No child should die from diarrhea or suffer its lasting consequences.

Learn more about stopping the cycle of diarrheal disease. Read DefeatDD’s state-of-the-field report:

DefeatDD.org/state-of-the-field

Photos courtesy of the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation