

# WHY WATER, SANITATION AND HYGIENE MATTER FOR PEOPLE LIVING WITH HIV/AIDS

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## Why Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene (WASH) Matter for PLWHA

- Diarrhea affects 90% of people living with HIV and AIDS (PLWHA), causing significant morbidity and mortality
- Morbidity and mortality from diarrhea more severe in HIV+ children
- Most diarrhea is caused by unsafe water, inadequate sanitation and poor hygiene
- Diarrheal disease reduces absorption of antiretrovirals
- Diarrheal disease is demoralizing and debilitating for PLWHA and is a burden on caregivers in clinics and homes
- PLWHA need more water to keep environment clean, to soften food, prepare weaning foods

## The Evidence Base for WASH

- Hygiene improvement can reduce risk of diarrhea disease (DD) for PLWHA by 30% or more
- Safe water consumption, presence of soap and latrine each associated with reduced incidence and severity of diarrhea with PLWHA
- Hand washing with soap can reduce DD by 43%
- Safe water treatment and storage at the point of use can reduce DD by 30-50%
- Proper disposal of feces can reduce DD by 30% or more
- Literature review WB/WSP and USAID/HIP outlines the evidence base, available on line



HIP Resources on HIV/AIDS and Hygiene Integration  
<http://www.hip.watsan.net>  
 Join the International Community of Practice!  
[hip@aed.org](mailto:hip@aed.org)

## What Can be Done?

### Identify “Small Doable Actions”

Though not the ideal practice, small doable actions are small improvements to existing household practices that are feasible in resource poor contexts yet still effective in reducing diarrhea and improving the quality of life

Simple action research methodology available to identify “small doable actions”

Integrate Small Doable Actions into Existing Care and Support Programs for PLWHA & HIV Considerations into Water and Sanitation Programs

Programming guidance, capacity building curricula, job aids available

## Illustrative Small Doable Actions for Household Water Treatment & Storage, Feces Management, and Hand Washing

### Current Practices Needing Improvement

### Small Doable Actions

Drinking water contaminated in transport

Treat water

Storage container uncovered

Change to narrow neck container

Unclean cup used to serve water

Cover and attach cover to neck with string to keep off floor

Not enough water

Water utility identify ‘vulnerable areas’ to increase availability

No running water for handwashing

Use tippy tap to conserve water

Dip hand washing

Create a hand washing station in home  
 Make ‘home made’ potty/ bed pan from local materials

No latrine

Build ecosan latrine

Person with HIV AIDS too weak to stand and travel to latrine

Clear path to latrine, fill holes

Make housing around latrine larger for assistant to enter and assist

Add support poles, stools as needed to support squatting

