



## Health Crisis adds to Somalia's woes

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### STORY HIGHLIGHTS

One Somalia hospital has treated more than 6,000 cases of cholera and diarrhea this year  
CNN video footage shows emaciated babies receiving fluids intravenously  
The World Health Organization is building up supplies and working on prevention

**(CNN)** -- In addition to a disastrous drought and political violence, Somalia is facing a potentially devastating health crisis.

The World Health Organization's regional office for the Eastern Mediterranean said that at one hospital alone, more than 6,000 cases of cholera and diarrhea have been reported since January of this year.

Banadir Hospital in Mogadishu is one of Somalia's largest, but its website warns that it has been "flooded" with recent cases of acute watery diarrhea, or AWD, a condition associated with cholera and unclean drinking water leading to malnutrition and fatal dehydration.

CNN video taken Thursday at a Banadir Hospital's pediatric diarrhea center shows heart-wrenching images of emaciated babies and their worried parents. Many of the infants were receiving fluids through intravenous drips.

A flyer distributed by the center emphasizes the importance of hydration, and encourages mothers to breastfeed as much as possible.

But even with intensive hydration and medical care, many will not survive. In just the past week, four children under the age of 5 have died at Banadir Hospital, health agencies say.

More than 190 other children were hospitalized there in the same period, along with nearly 100 adults. But it is children who bear the brunt of this condition: This year, 45% of AWD-related deaths have been among children under 2 years old, according to World Health Organization statistics.

The organization has been building up its supplies and working on preventive activities in reaction to the ongoing conflict near Mogadishu, Somalia's capital. Its most recent statement warns that "the increased influx of internal displaced people and the precarious living conditions are high risk for outbreaks, and the number of AWD cases is expected to rise significantly between now and October."