



Shigellosis Fact Sheet

What is shigellosis?

Shigellosis is an intestinal infection caused by bacteria called "shigella" which can produce severe diarrhea, stomach cramps and fever. Some people who are infected may have no symptoms at all, but may still pass the infection on to others.

How is shigella spread?

Shigella can be spread in the following ways:

- By bacteria which are transferred from infected or soiled fingers of one person to the mouth of another person:
 - o By improper hand washing after changing a diaper of an infected infant
 - o By improper hand washing of an infected person after a bowel movement
- By eating contaminated foods:
 - o Raw or uncooked meats
 - o Unwashed vegetables contaminated in the field with sewage
- By drinking or swimming in contaminated water
- By flies that carry it from feces to food

What are possible symptoms?

The symptoms will usually occur between 1 -3 days after exposure.

General symptoms may include

- Diarrhea (may contain blood or mucus)
- Fever
- Chills
- Stomach cramps
- Nausea /vomiting

A small number of people infected with shigella will have joint pains, eye irritation, and painful urination, which is called Reiter's syndrome. It can last for months to years, and may lead to chronic arthritis.

How is shigella diagnosed?

Shigella is usually diagnosed through a stool test. Follow up stool tests are often done to confirm that a patient is no longer infected.

What is the treatment for shigella?

Shigella is usually treated with antibiotics, although people with milder cases may recover without

medication. Anti-diarrheal medicines such as *Imodium* or *Lomotil* are likely to make the illness worse and should be avoided. As with all cases of vomiting or diarrhea it is important to stay hydrated by drinking plenty of fluids.

How can shigella be prevented?

- Practice good hygiene
- Wash your hands with soap frequently, especially after using the bathroom, changing diapers, and before preparing food and drinks
- Dispose of dirty diapers properly and disinfect diaper-changing areas with bleach, Lysol, or anti-bacterial wipes.
- Supervise hand washing of children
- Avoid drinking pool water
- If you have the illness, do not prepare food for others

If I am infected with shigella, do I have to stay home from work, school, etc.?

Anyone who is infected, or is a household contact or care giver of anyone who is infected, should not be employed to handle food, provide day care, or direct patient care until diarrhea stops and 2 stool samples have tested negative for shigella.

Students who are infected should not attend school until they have been symptom free for at least 24-48 hours. (School policies may vary.)

Children who attend daycare should not be brought back until they have been symptom free for 48 hours or 2 stool samples have tested negative for shigella.

For more information on shigella:

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)
<http://www.cdc.gov/shigella>

CDC Public Information

In English/en Espanol 1-800-232-4636
TTY 1-888-874-2646

Contact Public Health for more information:

Jefferson County Health Department (740) 283-8530
Steubenville City Health Department (740) 283-6000 x1506