

SHIGELLA

PERSONAL HEALTH FACT SHEET

What is Shigella?

Shigella is a bacterium that gets into the intestines and causes illness. After infection, Shigella bacteria are found in a person's feces (stool). Most cases are seen in the summer and early fall and occur as single cases or outbreaks.

How is it spread?

It is directly spread by an infected person who does not wash their hands after having a bowel movement or it may be spread to healthy persons whom do not wash their hands after changing the diaper of an infected child. It is indirectly spread by eating something prepared by an infected person who has not properly cleaned their hands and fingernails. If you have been exposed to the bacteria, you may develop symptoms 1-3 days later.

How is it treated?

Shigella is usually diagnosed by laboratory analysis of a stool sample. Your doctor may prescribe medication; even if you feel better, make sure you take all the medication. It is important to continue drinking liquids like clear juices, broth, jello, tea, or pop. If you are a food-handler or if you work or attend a day care center, you should not work or attend until symptoms are gone. Additional stool samples may need to be submitted to ensure the bacteria is no longer present (it can persist for up to 4 weeks).

How can we prevent Shigella?

- Practice good hygiene
- After using the toilet and before preparing food, **wash your hands.**

SYMPTOMS OF SHIGELLA

Symptoms usually occur 1 to 3 days after exposure and may persist for 4-7 days.

- Diarrhea (may contain blood and mucus)
- Fever
- Nausea
- Abdominal cramps



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