



## SHIGELLOSIS

### What is shigellosis?

Shigellosis is a bacterial infection that affects the intestines. It is a fairly common disease caused by *Shigella* bacteria.

### Who gets shigellosis?

Anyone can get shigellosis, but it is recognized more often in young children. Individuals at greatest risk are children in daycare centers, travelers to certain foreign countries, people in institutions, and men actively having sex with other men.

### How is shigellosis spread?

*Shigella* bacteria are found in the intestines and feces (stools) of infected people who, in turn, may contaminate food or water. The bacteria are spread by direct contact with an infected person, by eating or drinking contaminated food or water, or by contact with a contaminated object.

People with shigellosis may be able to spread the disease even after they are well. Most people pass the *Shigella* bacteria in their stool for one to two weeks. Sometimes people continue to pass the bacteria for as long as six weeks.

### What are the symptoms of shigellosis?

People infected with the *Shigella* bacteria may have mild or severe diarrhea (loose stools), often with traces of blood or mucous; abdominal cramping, fever, nausea, and vomiting. Some infected people may not show any symptoms.

### How soon do symptoms appear?

The symptoms usually appear one to three days after exposure and usually last for four to seven days.

### Should an infected person be excluded from work or school?

People with diarrhea need to be excluded from daycare, food service, or any other group activity where they may present a risk to others. Most infected people return to work or school when their diarrhea stops if they carefully wash their hands after using the restroom. Food handlers, children and staff in daycare settings, and health care workers may return to work or school when they recover, as long as they carefully wash hands after toilet use. Children in daycare and other sensitive situations should contact the Division of Public Health's Office of Infectious Disease Epidemiology at 1-888-295-5156 before returning to their routine activities. Food handlers may not return to work until three back-to-back negative stool samples are analyzed by a laboratory.

**Office of Infectious Disease Epidemiology**  
**24/7 Emergency Contact Number: 1-888-295-5156**



## Frequently Asked Questions

### **What is the treatment for shigellosis?**

Most people with shigellosis will recover on their own. Some may require fluids to prevent dehydration. Antibiotics are sometimes used to treat severe cases or to shorten the carrier phase. This may allow food handlers, health care employees, children and staff in daycare settings, and institutionalized individuals to return to their routine activities sooner.

### **What can a person or community do to prevent the spread of shigellosis?**

Since *Shigella* bacteria are passed in the stool, the single most important way to prevent the disease is careful hand washing, including under fingernails, after using the toilet, after diapering, and before preparing food.

### **Resources**

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, <https://www.cdc.gov/shigella/index.html>