

Fact Sheet: Shigellosis

What is Shigellosis?

Shigellosis is a disease caused by bacteria that infect the intestines. This is one of the easiest germs to give to others because it only takes a few bacteria to make you sick. The germ is found in an infected person's bowel movements or in contaminated food or water.

What are the symptoms?

- Stomach ache
- Fever
- Diarrhea that may contain blood and mucus
- Constant pressure to have a bowel movement
- Nausea/vomiting

Symptoms usually start 1 to 3 days after infection with the bacteria and last for 4 to 7 days. Some people may be asymptomatic.

How is it spread?

Shigellosis is spread to others when infected people do not wash their hands after using the bathroom or after changing the diaper of a child with this illness. The bacteria may be spread up to four weeks after illness. Asymptomatic carriers may transmit infections.

How is it treated?

If you do have this disease, the doctor will give you a special medicine to take. Make sure that you take all of the medicine. **Do not stop taking the medicine even if you feel better.** Check back with your doctor after the medicine is gone to make sure that you are cured. If you or anyone in your family is diagnosed with this disease, ALL members of the family should be checked by your doctor for shigella.

If you have Shigellosis:

- **Do not** prepare food
- **Wash** your hands after using the bathroom.
- Clean the bathroom, including the toilet flushing handle, water faucets and doorknobs, with one part bleach in ten parts water (make a fresh solution everyday).
- Drink plenty of fluids, such as water and juice, to reduce the risk of dehydration.

When children are infected with Shigella you should:

- Wash your hands and the child's hands after changing diapers or using the bathroom.
- Put disposable diapers in a plastic bag and throw out in a tightly closed garbage can.
- Keep sick children away from other children until they are well.
- Wash dirty sheets, clothes, and cloth diapers in **hot** soapy water and dry in a dryer.
- Wash toys that can be put in a child's mouth after each child's use — with one part bleach in ten parts water (make a fresh solution everyday).

If you are a food service worker, a health care worker, or a childcare worker, report your illness to your supervisor and do not work until you are no longer ill and your medical provider says it is OK to return to work.

How is it prevented?

- Wash your hands often, especially before preparing food and eating, and after using the bathroom or changing diapers.
- Teach your children how to wash their hands.
- Keep your bathroom clean.

This fact sheet is for information only and is not meant to be used for self -diagnosis or as a substitute for consultation with a health care provider. For more information call your health care provider or call Washtenaw County Public Health at 734-544-6700.

