

GET THE FACTS

Shigellosis

What is Shigella?

Shigella is a bacterial that causes an infection called shigellosis. Each year *Shigella* bacteria causes around 450,000 infections in the United States.

What are the symptoms?

Symptoms of *Shigella* include: diarrhea that can be bloody, fever, stomach pain, and feeling the need to pass stool (poop) even when the bowels are empty. Other people will not have any symptoms.

How long does this disease last?

Symptoms normally last 5 to 7 days, but some people may experience symptoms from a few days to 4 or more weeks. In other instances, symptoms may last several months before bowel habits are entirely normal.

How is Shigella spread?

Direct: It can spread easily in environments such as day care facilities. People become infected with *Shigella* by eating food or drinking liquids contaminated by an infected person, touching contaminated surfaces or objects and then touching their mouth, and putting a contaminated object into their mouth.

Who is at risk for Shigella infection?

Shigella infection (shigellosis) is most common among young children. Large outbreaks of shigellosis often start in childcare settings and spread among small social groups. Shigella infection has also occurred in travelers to countries that do not have treated tap water or adequate sanitation. Other people at risk include gay or bisexual men and other men who have sex with men (MSM), and people with weakened immune systems (such as HIV) or medical treatment (such as chemotherapy for cancer).

What preventive measures and treatments are available?

People with severe illness and those with underlying conditions that weaken the immune system should be given antibiotics. Antibiotics can shorten the duration of illness (by about 2 days) and might help reduce the spread of *Shigella* to others. Washing your hands often with soap and running water and taking other hygiene measures can help protect you and your loved ones from infection.



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What should schools do?

- Notify exposed family and staff members
- **Notify CDPH as soon as possible within 7 days if 2 or more cases are identified within a 14 day period**
- Refer pregnant women to their healthcare provider
- Supervise handwashing of toddlers and small children after they use the bathroom.
- Wash your hands and your infant's hands with soap and water after diaper changes
- NOT share food with anyone if they or their family members are sick
- Ensure that staff involved in food preparation are not the same staff that are responsible for changing diapers.
- Exclude children from childcare and school while sick or until the health department says it's safe to return
- Dispose of soiled diapers properly, and clean diaper changing areas after using them
- Avoid taking child swimming or to group water play venues for one week after their diarrhea has gone away.

What are recommendations for exclusion?

- Medical clearance required; exclude until diarrhea has ceased for at least 48 hours; additional restrictions may apply. Release specimens may be required.
- Exclude children diagnosed with shigellosis from water play and swimming for one week after their diarrhea has resolved.
- Have children and staff shower with soap before swimming.
- If a child is too young to shower independently, have staff wash the child, particularly the rear end, with soap and water.

