

What is Shigella?

Shigella is bacteria 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 infection (Shigellosis) include diarrhea (that can be bloody), fever, stomach pain, nausea, vomiting, and feeling the need to pass stool (poop) even when the bowels are empty. Some people will not have any symptoms.

How long does Shigella last?

Symptoms normally start 1-2 days after being infected and last 5 to 7 days, but some people may experience symptoms for up to 4 or more weeks. In other instances, symptoms may last several months before bowel habits are entirely normal.

How is Shigella spread?

Shigella can spread easily in environments such as early childcare facilities. People become infected with Shigella by eating food or drinking liquids contaminated by an infected person or by touching contaminated surfaces or objects and then touching their mouth without washing their hands. Swallowing just a small amount of Shigella germs can make you sick.

Who is at risk for Shigella infection?


Shigella infection 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 people with weakened immune systems (such as HIV) or medical treatment (such as chemotherapy for cancer).

What preventive measures and treatments are available?

The best way to prevent Shigella is through good hand hygiene and proper disinfection of surfaces. Most people with Shigella infection get better without any treatment after 5 to 7 days. People with Shigella infection should drink plenty of fluids to prevent dehydration. Those with bloody diarrhea should not use anti-diarrhea medicine as these may make symptoms worse. In certain cases, a healthcare provider may prescribe antibiotics to help symptoms improve faster.



What should schools do?

- ***Notify CDPH as soon as possible (and within 7 days) if Shigella is diagnosed in a member of your school community. Cases in both children and staff must be reported.***
- Notify families of exposed students and exposed staff members and recommend they consult with their healthcare provider if they develop diarrhea. CDPH will help you identify who is considered to be exposed.
- Encourage children and staff to wash hands regularly with warm, soapy water for 20 seconds, especially after using the bathroom and before eating. Supervise handwashing of toddlers and small children. Advise staff and parents of infants to wash their hands and their infant's hands with soap and water after diaper changes.
- Advise staff and families to 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.
- Dispose of soiled diapers properly, and clean diaper changing areas after using them.
- Ensure appropriate cleaning and disinfection of classrooms and diapering/toileting areas where a case has occurred; include high touch surfaces such as bathrooms, doorknobs, classroom tables, and toys. A 10% bleach solution made fresh each day is effective against Shigella.
 Alternative disinfectants that are effective against Shigella can be found at:
<https://www.epa.gov/pesticide-registration/selected-epa-registered-disinfectants>.

What are recommendations for exclusion?

- Exclude until diarrhea, vomiting, and fever have ceased for at least 24 hours. Additional restrictions may apply.
- Staff who handle food, assist with diapering/toileting, or care for children under 5 may be required to submit tests to return to work. If a case is identified in your school or daycare, CDPH will provide guidance on exclusion for those who are ill and their contacts.
- Exclude children diagnosed with Shigella from water play and swimming until their diarrhea has stopped for 2 weeks.
- For more information, visit [About Shigella Infection | CDC](#) or Preventing [Shigella Infection Among Young Children | CDC](#)

