

# Fact Sheet: *Shigella*

## What is *Shigella*?

*Shigella* is a highly contagious bacteria that causes the diarrheal disease, Shigellosis. The germ is found in an infected person's bowel movements or in contaminated food or water. This is one of the easiest germs to give to others because it only takes a **VERY** few bacteria to make you sick.

## Signs and Symptoms

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

Symptoms usually start one to two days after infection with the bacteria and last for five to seven days. Some people may not show any symptoms.

**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 your medical provider says it is OK to return to work.**

## Treatment

If you present with symptoms of *Shigella*, seek medical attention. Your doctor will prescribe a medication that should be taken to completion. Do NOT stop taking the medicine, even if you feel better. If you or another family member is diagnosed with *Shigella*, then **ALL** members of the family should be checked for the disease by your doctor.

### If you have *Shigella*, you should:

- Wash your hands after using the restroom
- Properly disinfect all surfaces of the bathroom
- Drink plenty of fluids
- **DO NOT** prepare food

## How is it spread?

*Shigella* 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. People without symptoms are able to transmit infections.

## Preventative Measures

- Thoroughly cook all foods
- Wash your hands (20-30 seconds with warm, soapy water)
  - After using the bathroom
  - Before food preparation
  - Before eating
  - After assisting a child with toileting
  - After changing diapers
- Use a diluted bleach solution to disinfect surfaces; *Shigella* can survive for weeks on dry surfaces
- Clean common areas including: door knobs, bathroom and kitchen faucets, toilet handles and counter tops
- Do NOT let ill persons prepare food or beverages for others
- Ill persons should be symptom free, with formed stools, for at least 48 hours before returning to work, school or daycare.

### If your child has *Shigella*

- Wash your hands and the child's hands after changing diapers, or using the bathroom
- Put disposable diapers in a plastic bag and place in a tightly closed garbage can
- Wash dirty sheets, clothes and cloth diapers in hot soapy water and dry in dryer
- Wash toys after use with hot, soapy water
- Keep sick children away from others, until they are well

This fact sheet is for informational purposes and is not meant to be used for self-diagnosis or as a substitute for consultation with a health care professional. For more information about communicable disease, speak to your health care provider or call the Ingham County Health Department at (517)-887-4308.

Visit our website at <http://hd.ingham.org>

or the Centers for Disease Control & Prevention at: [www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov)  
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