Indiana State Department of Health
Epidemiology Resource Center

Quick Facts

About…Shigellosis

What is shigellosis?

Shigellosis (shig-uh-LOH-sis) is a diarrheal illness caused by *Shigella* bacteria. *Shigella* bacteria are found mainly in humans and the infection is very easily passed from person to person.

What are the symptoms of shigellosis?

- Sudden stomach pain or cramps
- Diarrhea (may be bloody)
- Fever
- Vomiting

Symptoms usually begin 24-72 hours after exposure and last about 4-7 days. Some people may have no symptoms, but can still spread the infection to others.

How is shigellosis spread?

Shigella is passed in the stool and people become infected by having contact with stool from an infected person. This includes:

- Consuming food or drinks prepared by a sick person.
- Cleaning up stool or vomit.
- Touching a contaminated surface or object.
- Having close contact with an ill household member.
- Having sexual contact that involves contact with stool.

Who is at risk for getting shigellosis?

Anyone can become ill, but young children, senior adults, pregnant women, and immune suppressed individuals (such as patients on cancer drugs and with organ transplants) are at high risk for illness.

How do I know if I have shigellosis?

A person having diarrhea for ≥ 24 hours or with bloody stool should see his or her doctor. Your doctor will ask you questions, do a physical exam, and a lab test.

How is shigellosis treated?

Most people recover in 2-3 days without treatment, but some people may require medicine. Since diarrhea can cause dehydration, an ill person should drink plenty of fluids. Some medications may not work for certain strains of *Shigella*. Your health care provider will determine what is right for you.

How is shigellosis prevented?

In general, shigellosis can be prevented by following these steps:

- Wash hands with soap and water after using the restroom; after assisting someone with diarrhea and/or vomiting; after swimming; and before, during, and after food preparation.
- Clean food preparation work surfaces, equipment, and utensils with soap and water before, during, and after food preparation.
- Wash all produce before eating raw or cooking.
- Persons with diarrhea and/or vomiting should limit direct contact with others as much as possible.
- Persons with diarrhea and/or vomiting should stay home from school or daycare.
- Persons with diarrhea and/or vomiting should not work with food.

All information presented is intended for public use. For more information, please refer to: http://www.cdc.gov/shigella/index.html

Food and Drug Administration, Food Facts for Consumers:
http://www.fda.gov/Food/ResourcesForYou/Consumers/ucm077286.htm

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