



Shigellosis

Adapted from Shigellosis Fact Sheet from California Department of Public Health

What is it?

Shigellosis is a diarrhea illness caused by bacteria that infect the intestines. People sick with shigellosis can have fever, belly pain, nausea, vomiting and diarrhea that might be bloody. Usually, people get better. However, young children, the elderly, and those with weakened immune systems may have more severe illness.

How is it spread?

The *Shigella* bacteria spread from one person to another. The bacteria are in the stools or feces of an infected person while they are sick and even up to two weeks after symptoms stop. The infected stool can get on the hands of people changing diapers or cleaning up after diarrhea. Also, if someone sick with *Shigella* does not wash their hands well after using the bathroom they can spread the bacteria. When a healthy person gets the bacteria in his or her mouth, they can get sick. People living with sick people are at high risk for getting sick.

People sick with *Shigella* who work in food service, health care, or child care need to stay off work until they no longer have the bacteria in their stool. Children age five and under who are in school or child care also need to stay home until their stool tests are negative.

What is the treatment?

People with mild illness usually get better quickly without treatment. Sometimes people need to receive extra fluids. Sometimes the extra fluid needs to be given by vein. In certain situations, antibiotics can help to shorten the length of the illness. Anti-diarrheal medicine like loperamide should be avoided.

What can I do to protect myself and my family?

- 1) Wash hands with soap and water after using the bathroom, changing diapers, and before handling food.
- 2) Wash raw fruits and vegetables before using.
- 3) Avoid contaminating food by safely handling raw meat and storing food correctly.
- 4) Ensure that drinking water is not contaminated.
- 5) Make sure your home is protected from flies by screening doors and windows and safely using insecticides.
- 6) Carefully dispose of feces.

If you have any questions or concerns, please call the Disease Control Unit at (707) 565-4567 or e-mail Phnurse@sonoma-county.org.