



Communicable Diseases

DIARRHEA CAUSED BY SHIGELLA

What is Shigella?

- Shigella is a germ that causes acute diarrhea.
- This disease spreads very easily from person-to-person because it takes only a few bacteria to make you sick.
- It is a disease of humans, animals do not carry the disease.

How does a person get Shigella?

- It is spread by fecal oral route which means:
 - When a person is infected with Shigella, the bacteria is shed in the stool
 - Improper hand washing and hygiene can lead to the spread of germs directly to others, to objects and the environment
 - Once the bacteria is ingested, you will likely become infected with the disease
- Ingestion of contaminated food or water.
- Sexual activity with an infected partner may spread the disease.

What are the signs and symptoms?

Symptoms usually occur within 1-3 days. The main symptoms are:

- Mild to severe diarrhea, sometimes bloody
- Stomach cramps
- Nausea
- Vomiting
- Fever

How is Shigella treated?

Most people get better on their own in 5-7 days. However, the illness can be more severe in children, the elderly and people with chronic conditions. Drink plenty of fluids to prevent dehydration and visit your health centre as soon as possible.

How is Shigella prevented?

- Handwashing is the most important way to prevent infection. Since bacteria are passed in the stool (bowel movement), always wash your hands with soap and water:
 - After using the toilet
 - After changing diapers
 - After touching any stool-soiled item
 - Before fixing any food or drink
 - Before eating
- Young children should be helped to wash their hands.
- Stay home from work or school, and from visiting friends and relatives, preferably until at least 48 hours after diarrhea has stopped.

When should you stay at home?

- **If you are a food handler, health care, childcare or other staff involved with personal care stay home until diarrhea has cleared and 2 consecutive negative stool cultures are obtained at least 24 hours apart and at least 48 hours after antibiotics are finished.**
- **Children below the age of five years in childcare, and older children and adults unable to maintain adequate standards of personal hygiene should stay home until diarrhea has cleared and 2 consecutive negative stool cultures are obtained at least 24 hours apart and at least 48 hours after discontinuation of antibiotics.**



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Contact your local Health Centre if you require further information.