

SHIGELLOSIS (Shigella)

What is Shigellosis?

Shigellosis is a bacterial infection of the large and small intestines caused by the bacteria called *Shigella*. Shigellosis commonly occurs during the summer and early fall in Utah.

Who gets Shigellosis?

Anyone can get shigellosis. Young children, especially those who attend day-care centers, are infected more often.

How is Shigellosis spread?

Shigella bacteria is found in the feces (stool) of an infected person. It may be spread by close contact or by eating or drinking contaminated food or water.

What are the symptoms?

People infected with *Shigella* may have mild to severe diarrhea, fever, nausea, vomiting, and cramps. Stools may contain blood, mucus and pus. Some people who are infected may have no symptoms. However, they still may transmit the infection to others.

How soon do symptoms appear?

Symptoms usually appear one to three days after infection. Onset of symptoms may also be as soon as 12 hours after infection, or as late as one week after infection.

How long is a person able to spread *Shigella*?

People are infectious as long as the *Shigella* bacteria are present in the feces. Most people have *Shigella* in their feces for one to two weeks. Treatment usually reduces the length of time a person can spread the bacteria.

What is the treatment for Shigellosis?

Most people recover on their own. Persons with severe diarrhea, especially small children and elderly people, should see a doctor. Antibiotics may shorten the duration of diarrhea and remove the bacteria from the feces.

Should infected people be excluded from school or work?

Since *Shigella* is found in the feces, people with diarrhea should not go to school or work. People may return to school or work when they no longer have diarrhea. However, people who handle food, should be treated, and have no *Shigella* in their stools (two negative stool cultures) before they return to work.

What can be done to prevent the spread of *Shigella*?

Everyone should carefully wash their hands after using the toilet, or changing diapers and before eating or handling food.

Where can I get more information?

- Your personal doctor
- Your local health department, listed in your telephone directory
- The Utah Department of Health, Bureau of Epidemiology (801) 538-6191

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