

Shigellosis

Disease Fact Sheet

What is shigellosis?

Shigellosis is an intestinal disease caused the the *Shigella* bacteria

What are the symptoms?

Typical symptoms include diarrhea, sometimes bloody, fever, cramps, nausea, and sometimes vomiting. Symptoms usually last 3-10 days. Some people may not have any symptoms.

How soon do the symptoms appear?

The incubation period ranges from 1 to 7 days, with an average of 1 to 3 days.

How do you get it?

Shigella is transmitted by fecal-->oral spread. The bacteria are in the feces (stools) of people who are infected with *Shigella*. You get *Shigella* by eating food or drinking beverages that have been prepared by an infected person whose hands are contaminated with feces. You can also get it if your own hands are contaminated by feces, such as after changing a diaper, and then you eat with your hands or put your hands in your mouth. Because of this, the bacteria is spread easily within the family unit and between small children. It is NOT spread by coughing or sneezing.

How do you find out if you have it?

Your doctor may order a stool culture test in which the bacteria is grown from a sample of your feces. An infected person will shed the bacteria while they are ill and for up to 4 weeks after they recover and no longer have symptoms.

How is it treated?

Your doctor can prescribe an antibiotic that will shorten the duration of symptoms and shorten the time a person sheds the bacteria.

How can you keep from getting it?

- Wash your hands after changing diapers.
- Insist that EVERYONE in your household wash their hands after using the toilet and before preparing food or feeding children.
- Wash your hands before eating.

How can you keep from spreading it if you have it?

WASH YOUR HANDS--after going to the bathroom, before fixing food, before wiping children's faces. Ill persons should not prepare food if it can be avoided. Those who prepare food outside the home should not return to work until your doctor tells you it's okay.