

## SHIGELLOSIS FACT SHEET

### What is shigellosis?

Shigellosis is an intestinal disease caused by bacteria called *Shigella*.

### What are the symptoms of shigellosis?

Most people who are infected with *Shigella* usually develop symptoms 1 to 3 days after they have been exposed to the bacteria. Some people who are infected may have no or few symptoms, but may still pass the bacteria to others. Typical symptoms include:

- Diarrhea (may be watery or bloody)
- Fever
- Stomach cramps
- Nausea or vomiting
- Severe cases may cause dehydration (loss of fluids) or convulsions (in younger children).

Symptoms usually last 5 to 7 days.

### How can you be exposed to shigellosis?

The *Shigella* bacteria pass from one infected person to another. The germ is in the stool (bowel movements) of an infected person and infects another person when hands, food, beverages or objects (toys, pens, etc.) contaminated with the stool, are placed in the mouth. Spread occurs when the infected person has not washed his/her hands properly. Because of this, the bacteria spread easily among family members, close contacts and children in day care facilities. It is **NOT** spread by coughing or sneezing.

### What is the treatment for shigellosis?

Most people with shigellosis will recover on their own. Some may require fluids to prevent dehydration. Antibiotics are occasionally used to treat severe cases or to shorten the length of time bacteria are passed in the stool. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends that over-the-counter antidiarrheal agents should be avoided because they are likely to make the illness worse.

## **What can be done to prevent the spread of shigellosis?**

There is no vaccine to prevent shigellosis. However, shigellosis can be prevented by:

- Practicing frequent and proper hand washing with warm water and soap, especially after using the bathroom, changing diapers, when preparing and eating food and feeding children.
- Properly disposing soiled diapers in a closed-lid garbage can.
- Wiping down the diaper changing area with a disinfectant or antibacterial wipes.
- Keeping the home and surroundings clean to prevent contamination of food and water supply, including kitchen work surfaces.
- Drinking only treated or boiled water and eating cooked hot foods when traveling to developing countries. Only eat fruits that you peel yourself.

**NOTE: It is important that infected food handlers, child care workers, patient care providers and children attending child care facilities stay away from their regular activities until they have had at least 2 stool samples that have tested negative for shigellosis.**

### **Where can I get more information?**

[www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov)

[www.dshs.state.tx.us](http://www.dshs.state.tx.us)

### **Source of Information**

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)