

Shigellosis

What is shigellosis?

Shigellosis is a diarrheal illness caused by Shigella bacteria.

Who gets shigellosis?

Anyone can become ill with shigellosis. Children, people who are immunocompromised, travelers to places where sanitation is poor, and men who have sex with men are at increased risk for developing shigellosis.

How is shigellosis spread?

The Shigella bacteria causing shigellosis spreads very easily from a person experiencing the illness. Shigellosis infection occurs by directly swallowing the bacteria. This can occur when a person touches a contaminated surface and then touches their mouth, swallowing contaminated water, or exposure to fecal matter during sexual contact.

What are the symptoms of shigellosis?

Symptoms of shigellosis include watery, bloody, or prolonged diarrhea. Other symptoms include abdominal pain, the urge to use the bathroom without being able to, fever, and malaise.

How soon do symptoms appear?

Symptoms typically appear 1 to 2 days after infection and can last 7 days.

How long is a person able to spread shigellosis?

Shigella can be spread while a person is symptomatic and up to a few weeks after diarrhea has subsided. Exposure to the bacteria occurs when a person has come in contact with the stool of someone who has had the infection. This commonly occurs when a person touches contaminated surfaces, consumes contaminated food or water, or exposure to fecal matter through sexual contact.

What is the treatment for shigellosis?

Treatment for shigellosis general consists of supportive therapy. Make sure to drink plenty of fluids if you believe you have shigellosis. Your healthcare provider may take a stool sample and prescribe certain antibiotics.

What can be done to stop the spread of shigellosis?

Several steps can be taken to reduce the spread of shigellosis, including:

- Washing your hands before preparing and eating food and after changing a diaper or helping to clean a person who has just used the bathroom.
- Promptly throwing away soiled diapers
- Avoid swallowing water from untreated swimming pools, ponds, and lakes.
- When traveling internationally, wash hands often and utilize safe eating habits.