



Shigellosis

What is Shigellosis?

Shigellosis is an infectious disease caused by bacteria. It causes fever, stomach cramps and diarrhea that is often bloody. The illness usually last 5 to 7 days. There are several strains of the shigellosis bacteria. Most infections in the United States come from either type D or type B. Developing countries around the world see several other types of the shigella bacteria. One of those types, type 1, can cause deadly epidemics.

How do you get Shigellosis?

Shigellosis is passed from person to person. Most infections come from the bacteria being passed from stool (poop) and unclean hands to a person's mouth. This happens when people do not practice good hand washing. Shigellosis is more frequent amongst diaper-aged children and those who care for them.

In some cases, the bacteria can be spread from certain types of sexual activity. Shigellosis outbreaks have occurred amongst gay men.

People can also get shigellosis from contaminated food and water. Food can be contaminated by food handlers who do not wash their hands properly. Food and water can also become contaminated if sewage runs into harvesting fields or water sources.



How is Shigellosis diagnosed?

Many illnesses can cause diarrhea. Shigellosis is normally diagnosed by testing a patient's stool sample.

What is the treatment for Shigellosis?

Many people recover from Shigellosis without treatment. Antibiotic medication can be used to treat Shigellosis when needed. Anti-diarrhea medicine can make the illness worse and should not be taken.

Does Shigellosis cause long term problems?

Most people recover completely. It may take several months before bowel habits are completely normal again. Once a person has had shigellosis it is not likely they will get it again, at least for several years, unless they are infected with a different strain of the bacteria.



How can Shigellosis be prevented?

- Wash hands with soap and water
- If you are ill with diarrhea, do not prepare food and drinks for other people
- When changing baby diapers, dispose of used diapers in a closed-lid garbage can, and wash your own hands and the baby's hands
- Wipe down baby changing tables with a disinfectant cleaner
- If a child has diarrhea, do not take them to daycare

How can I avoid Shigellosis when traveling?

Shigellosis is more common in developing countries. Follow these tips to avoid getting Shigellosis and other types of traveler's diarrhea:

- Drink only treated or boiled water
- Eat only cooked foods
- Eat only fruits you have peeled yourself
- Wash your hands often



For more information:

Visit the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's website at www.cdc.gov or contact the Huron County Public Health at (419) 668-1652.