

Shigella

WHAT IS SHIGELLA?

Shigella bacteria are estimated to cause 450,000 infections in the United States each year. It is highly contagious, requiring only a small number of bacteria to cause illness. Those infected can continue spreading the infection for several weeks even after their diarrhea ends.

The infection is particularly dangerous for:

- Children younger than 5 years
- Travelers
- Gay, bisexual and other men who have sex with men
- People with weakened immune systems

HOW IS SHIGELLA TRANSMITTED?

- Swallowing the *Shigella* bacteria
- Handling infected individuals or their poop
- Consuming food prepared by someone with the infection
- Ingesting water while swimming in lakes or untreated pools
- Exposure to poop during sexual contact with an infected person

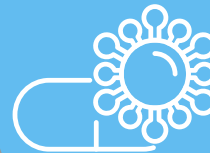
WHAT ARE THE SYMPTOMS OF SHIGELLA INFECTION?

Symptoms vary depending on the person infected and their own medical history. Common symptoms include:

- Diarrhea, often bloody
- Fever
- Abdominal cramping
- Feeling the need to pass poop even when bowels are empty

HOW DO I PREVENT SHIGELLA INFECTION?

- Wash hands before having sex, preparing food, after using the bathroom or changing diapers
- Avoid swallowing water from pools, hot tubs and splash pads
- Avoid swallowing water from lakes, ponds and oceans
- When traveling, follow safe food and hygiene habits
- If you or your partner has been diagnosed with *Shigella*, wait at least two weeks after diarrhea ends to have sex



Shigella bacteria are resilient and can survive for long periods outside the body.

TREATMENT FOR SHIGELLA

Recovery typically takes 5 to 7 days without antibiotics, with rest and fluids often being enough. For severe cases, antibiotics may be prescribed. If symptoms persist, more tests may be needed to find the right treatment.

RETURN TO WORK GUIDELINES

People who work in settings with a high risk of spreading infections, such as:

- Restaurants
- Healthcare facilities
- Daycares

Or children who attend daycare should stay home until two stool tests come back negative. These tests should be taken 24 hours apart, with the first one done 48 hours after completing any prescribed antibiotics.



IF YOU BELIEVE YOU HAVE BEEN EXPOSED AND ARE SICK WITH SHIGELLA, CONTACT YOUR PRIMARY CARE PROVIDER RIGHT AWAY!



Kentucky Public Health
Prevent. Promote. Protect.