

Mission:

To protect, promote & improve the health of all people in Florida through integrated state, county & community efforts.



Rick Scott
Governor

John H. Armstrong, MD, FACS
State Surgeon General & Secretary

Vision: To be the **Healthiest State** in the Nation

SHIGELLOSIS

Accompanying: Hand Washing Fact Sheet and Enteric Disease Guidelines

What is Shigellosis?

Shigellosis is an infection of the intestines caused by the shigella bacteria.

What are the signs and symptoms of a Shigellosis infection?

Signs and symptoms range from watery and loose stools to more severe high fever, abdominal pain and bloody diarrhea. Loss of appetite and loose stools often persist for several days. Dehydration, especially among infants, may be severe.

How are Shigellosis infections spread?

Shigellosis is spread by eating food contaminated by the feces of an infected animal or person or by ingesting the bacteria from food obtained from infected animals. Also, flies may transfer bacteria onto a non-refrigerated food item. Individuals primarily responsible for transmission are those who fail to thoroughly clean their hands and under their fingernails after using the toilet.

What is the incubation period of Shigellosis and how long is it contagious?

The incubation period varies one to seven days but typically may range from 12 to 96 hours. It is communicable during the acute infection and until the shigella bacteria is no longer present in the feces (approximately 4 weeks). Antibiotic treatment usually reduces the duration and the shedding of the bacteria to a few days.

What should I do if I think I have a Shigellosis infection?

Persons who have these symptoms should see their physicians. Shigella is a reportable disease and should be reported to the Health Department. Clearance to return to school or childcare should follow the Health Department enteric disease guidelines that accompany this sheet.

How can I prevent myself and others from getting a Shigellosis infection?

Prevention includes careful hand washing with soap and water, as outlined in the accompanying fact sheet, after petting animals, using the toilet, or changing a baby's diaper, and before eating, preparing food, or preparing baby formula. Also, it is important to improve sanitation and implement measures to decrease contamination by houseflies.

For more information, please contact the Florida Department of Health in Orange County, Epidemiology Program at 407-858-1420. You may also visit the Epidemiology Program website, <http://orcd.com/generalHealth/epidemiology/index.asp>, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention website, <http://www.cdc.gov/nczved/divisions/dfbmd/diseases/shigellosis/>, or the DOH-Orange School Health website at <http://orcd.com/personalHealth/schoolHealth/index.asp> for additional information.

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