

# Shigellosis

## What is Shigellosis?

Shigellosis is a disease caused by bacteria (Shigella) that infect the intestines. This is one of the easiest germs to give to others because it only takes a few bacteria to make a person ill. The germ is found in an infected person's bowel movement or in contaminated food or water. Many people have Shigellosis but are never tested.

## What are the symptoms?

- Stomachache
- Fever
- Diarrhea that may contain blood and mucus
- Constant pressure to have a bowel movement
- Nausea/vomiting



Symptoms usually start 1 to 3 days after infection with the bacteria and last for 4 to 7 days. Some people may not feel sick.

## How is it spread?

Shigellosis is spread to others when infected people do not wash their hands after using the bathroom or after changing the diaper of a child with the illness. The bacteria may be spread for 4 weeks after the illness. Persons without symptoms may transmit infections.

**Food can be contaminated from flies, sewage, or infected food handlers.**

## Food Transmission and Shigella –

### How is it prevented?

Consistent implementation of Food Code requirements will prevent food contamination. Food Code requirements to emphasize with employees include:

- **Restrict or exclude employees who have been ill or who have had ill family members**, in accordance with the Food Code (see Chapter 2, 2-201.11-201.12, for further details).
- **No bare hand contact with ready to eat foods.** Workers can accidentally contaminate food through bare hand contact if 1) they are infected OR 2) they have touched surfaces contaminated with the bacteria. Managers must monitor employees closely to ensure they are following this requirement.

- **Wash hands often.** This is very important, especially before preparing or handling food, eating, and after using or cleaning the restroom.
- **Wash hands well.** This means washing hands vigorously with warm running water and soap, using friction for at least 20 seconds and drying with paper towel.
- **Control flies in the facility.** Keep screens in place, do not leave windows or doors propped open. If flies become a problem, consult your pest control operator.

## Do I need to use extra sanitation measures?

- **Keep food contact surfaces clean.** Food surfaces and serving utensils in self-service areas like buffets and self-service food bars can become contaminated with Shigella from ill customers. Facilities should closely monitor sanitation to prevent transmission between customers. It is a good idea to clean surfaces and change out serving utensils more frequently to prevent transmission between customers.
- **Keep surfaces clean.** Areas people touch often could be contaminated, particularly in the bathroom (e.g., door knobs, diapering areas). It is recommended that these be disinfected with a freshly prepared solution of chlorine bleach daily. See instructions for making the solution below.

## Sanitizing Solution Directions

- Use chlorine bleach with a sodium hypochlorite active ingredient of at least 5.25%.
- Mix 1 part bleach with 9 parts water; shake well.
- Mix solution daily; discard after 24 hours.
- Keep in a dark bottle or dark place (light can deactivate the bleach).