

Shigellosis

1. What is Shigellosis?

Shigellosis is an infectious (spread person to person) disease caused by bacteria (germ) called *Shigella*. This disease causes diarrhea and can be serious for children, older adults and people with weak immune systems. The germ is found in stool (poop) of infected people. It can spread person-to-person when someone doesn't wash their hands after using the toilet and during sexual activity.

2. How does this disease spread?

Shigellosis can spread through sexual or casual (shaking hands) contact with an infected person. It can spread when an infected person doesn't wash their hands after passing stool (pooping) and has contact with other people. It can also spread during oral or oral-anal sex with an infected person. The *Shigella* germ can also be found in food that is made by someone who has the disease.

3. What are the symptoms?

Symptoms of this disease are stomach pain followed by diarrhea, fever, bloody stool (poop), nausea, vomiting, stomach cramps and a painful feeling of needing to poop. Symptoms appear about 1 to 2 days after being infected with the bacteria. These symptoms last about 5 to 7 days. Some people may not have symptoms, but can still spread shigellosis to other people. Talk to your doctor if you think you have shigellosis.

4. How is this disease treated?

People with mild shigellosis usually recover without treatment. Drink plenty of water to prevent dehydration (when your body loses water). There are medicines for people who have more severe cases of shigellosis. Treatment is recommended for people with weak immune systems. Talk to your doctor if you are experiencing severe diarrhea for more than 5 to 7 days.

5. How can you prevent getting this disease?

- Wash your hands with soap and warm water before eating and after changing diapers
- Avoid sexual activity with people who have diarrhea
- Avoid drinking pool or pond water
- Don't prepare food for others if you have diarrhea



Key Points:

- Shigellosis is a disease caused by a bacteria (germ) called *Shigella*.
- The disease is spread through casual and sexual contact with an infected person.
- Diarrhea is a common symptom and lasts about 5 to 7 days.
- People with mild shigellosis usually recover without treatment.
- Wash your hands with soap and warm water to prevent the spread of shigellosis.

For more information:

Los Angeles County,
Department of Public Health
<http://publichealth.lacounty.gov/acd/Diseases/Shigellosis.htm>

Centers for Disease Control and
Prevention (CDC)
<http://www.cdc.gov/shigella/index.html>