



1. What is shigellosis?

Shigellosis (shig-e-los-is) is a disease caused by a bacteria (germ). It affects the intestines and is one of the more common causes of diarrhea. It occurs most often in the summer and early fall and can occur as single cases or outbreaks.

2. How do you get shigellosis?

You can get shigellosis by:

- Eating contaminated food
- Drinking contaminated water
- Being exposed to human stool through sexual contact

The germs are found in the intestines of infected people and passed in their stool for up to one or two weeks after infection. Anyone can get shigellosis, but it happens most often in young children (1-5 years old). People at risk for infection include people who attend or work at day care centers, international travelers and swimmers who swallow contaminated water.

3. How do you know if you have shigellosis?

The most common symptoms of shigellosis include:

- Diarrhea
- Blood in the stool
- Nausea
- Stomach Cramps
- Fever

These symptoms usually start a day or two after contact with the germs. Shigellosis usually resolves within five days, however, it can be very serious in infants, children and the elderly.

4. How is shigellosis treated?

Some people with shigellosis will recover without treatment while others may need antibiotics if they are very sick. Women should tell their doctors if they are pregnant before receiving treatment. Patients, especially children and pregnant women, should drink extra fluids as long as the diarrhea lasts.

5. How can shigellosis be prevented?

- To prevent spreading the infection, every member of the household should wash their hands with soap and clean water often, especially at these times:
 - Before eating or preparing food
 - After using the bathroom or changing diapers
 - After handling pets or animals
- Do not swim in recreational water (pools, hot tubs, lakes, rivers, oceans, etc.) if you have shigellosis and for at least 2 weeks after the diarrhea stops.
- Limit work or school activities if you have diarrhea.
- Avoid sexual practices that might result in oral exposure to stool (e.g.: oral-anal contact).
- Bathe children that have diarrhea separately from other children.
- Do not change diapers on the kitchen table or wash them in the sink.
- Wash and peel all fruits and vegetables before eating.

Sources

1. *Shigellosis*. L.A. Department of Public Health. <http://publichealth.lacounty.gov/acd/> .
2. *Shigellosis*. California Department of Public Health. www.cdph.ca.gov/healthinfo .
3. *Shigellosis*. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention <http://www.cdc.gov/DiseasesConditions/> .

For additional resources, please visit the L.A. County Department of Public Health website <http://publichealth.lacounty.gov> .