

Shigellosis is an infection of the intestines usually caused by bacteria called *Shigella sonnei*

## Symptoms

Illness usually begins 1 to 4 days after swallowing the bacteria and may last 4 to 7 days. Sometimes people have no or few symptoms. Symptoms include:

- Diarrhea (may be watery or bloody)
- Fever
- Stomach cramps
- Nausea or vomiting
- Severe cases may cause dehydration (loss of fluids) or convulsions (in young children).

## How Is It Spread?

- The germs leave the body in the stool (bowel movements) of an infected person and infect another person when hands, food, or objects (toys, pens, etc.) contaminated with the stool, are placed in the mouth.
- Spread occurs because the infected person has not washed his/her hands well after going to the bathroom.
- Spread can occur whether or not the infected person has symptoms.
- Flies can spread shigella when they have contact with infected stool and then contaminate drinking water or food.

## Diagnosis & Treatment

- Shigella can be identified from a stool sample.
- Antibiotics can be prescribed to shorten both the duration of illness and the length of time bacteria are passed in the stool.
- Sometimes the infection clears without treatment.

## Prevention

- Practicing good hygiene and sanitation can prevent shigellosis. Wash hands well with soap and water each time you use the bathroom.
- Keep your home and surroundings clean to prevent contamination of food and water supply.
- Pay special attention to the proper disposal of soiled diapers and other human waste.
- Keep kitchen work surfaces clean.

## Additional Information

It is important that infected food handlers, child care workers, children attending childcare, and patient care providers stay away from their regular activities until they have completed at least 5 days of an appropriate antibiotic treatment and 2 stool samples that have been tested and do not have shigella bacteria in them.

**All information is general in nature and is not intended to be used as a substitute for appropriate professional advice.**