

Shigella

What is *Shigella*?

An infection caused by the *Shigella* bacteria.

What are the signs or symptoms?

- Loose, watery stools with blood or mucus
- Fever
- Headache
- Convulsions
- Abdominal pain

What are the incubation and contagious periods?

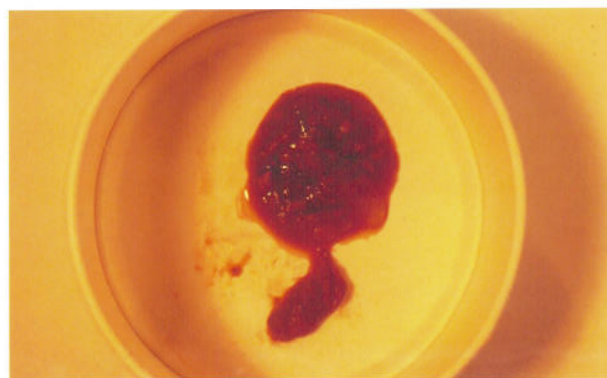
- Incubation period: 1 to 7 days; average is 2 to 4 days.
- Contagious period: Untreated, *Shigella* persists in stool for up to 4 weeks.

How is it spread?

- Fecal-oral route.
- Very small numbers of organisms can cause infection.
- Children 5 years or younger, adults who care for young children, and others living in crowded conditions are at increased risk of outbreaks.

How do you control it?

- Hand washing.
- Eliminate access to shared water play areas.
- Adherence to sanitary diaper changing techniques.
- Sanitary food handling, including measures to decrease contamination of food by houseflies and assurance that any staff with diarrhea are not involved in food handling or feeding.
- Culture stool from other people with diarrhea when a child or staff member is diagnosed with *Shigella* so that all those whose culture results are positive are treated with antibiotics and excluded until diarrhea stops and test results from stool cultures are negative for *Shigella*. If several people are infected, they may be grouped together (as a cohort) until their test results from stool cultures are negative for *Shigella*.
- Note: While most infections are self-limited, antibiotics are effective in shortening the duration of diarrhea and eliminating the *Shigella* bacteria.



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Bloody stool from a child with *Shigella* infection

What are the roles of the caregiver/teacher and the family?

- Report the infection to staff designated by the child care program or school for decision making and action related to care of ill children. That person, in turn, alerts possibly exposed family members and staff to watch for symptoms.
- Report the infection to the health department, as the health professional who makes the diagnosis may not report that the child who has the infection is a participant in a child care program or school, and this could lead to precious time for controlling the spread of the disease being lost.
- Stop food handling or feeding of others by individuals with diarrhea.

Exclude from group setting?

Yes. Exclude infected individuals until treatment is complete and test results from stool cultures are negative.

Readmit to group setting?

- When infected individuals are treated and test results from 2 stool cultures taken 24 hours apart are negative.
- Health professional must clear child for readmission for all cases of *Shigella*.
- Stool is contained in toilet (for toilet-trained children).
- Diarrhea is resolved for diapered children.
- When the child is able to participate and staff determine that they can care for the child without compromising their ability to care for the health and safety of the other children in the group.