

PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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SHIGELLA CASES REPORTED IN SHASTA COUNTY

SHASTA COUNTY— More than a dozen cases of the Shigella bacteria—a type of stomach bug that causes an infection called shigellosis—have been reported in the county. Some of these cases resulted in hospitalizations. The risk to the general public remains low, especially as people use the prevention tips below.

People with Shigella infection (shigellosis) can experience one or more of the following:

- Diarrhea that can be bloody or prolonged (lasting more than 3 days)
- Fever
- Stomach pain
- Feeling the need to pass stool (poop) even when the bowels are empty

Symptoms usually start one to three days after infection and last seven days. In some cases, bowel habits (frequency and consistency of stool) do not return to normal for several months.

How is Shigella transmitted?

Shigella spreads easily; it takes just a small number of bacteria to make someone sick. People with a Shigella infection can spread the infection to others for several weeks even after diarrhea symptoms end.

You can get infected by swallowing Shigella. Some ways Shigella can get into your mouth are:

- Getting Shigella on your hands and touching your mouth. Shigella can get on your hands by:
 - Touching contaminated surfaces, such as toys, bathroom fixtures, changing tables, and diaper pails.
 - Changing the diaper of a child with an infection.
 - Taking care of a person with an infection, including cleaning up after the person uses the toilet.
- Eating food prepared by someone with a Shigella infection
- Swallowing water that you swim or play in, such as lake or creek water or improperly treated swimming pool water.

- Swallowing contaminated drinking water, such as water from a well contaminated with sewage or flood water.
- Exposure to poop during sexual contact with someone with a Shigella infection or who has recently recovered from a Shigella infection.

Who is most likely to get Shigella infection?

- **Children younger than 5 years old** are the most likely to get shigellosis, but people of all ages can get the disease.
 - Many outbreaks occur in early care and education settings and schools. Infection commonly spreads from young children to their family members and other people in their communities because these bacteria spread easily.
- **Travelers** to places where water and food may be unsafe and sanitation is poor are more likely to get a Shigella infection. They are also more likely to become sick with types of Shigella that are more difficult to treat. Travelers may be exposed to the bacteria through contaminated food, water (both drinking and recreational water), surfaces, and even other people. Travelers can protect themselves by choosing safe food and drink options and washing hands with soap often.
- **Gay, bisexual, and other men who have sex with men*** are among groups at high risk for Shigella infection. Shigella can pass from stool or the soiled fingers of one person to the mouth of another person, including during sexual activity.
- **People who are experiencing homelessness** are at high risk for Shigella infection when there is shigellosis spread in the community. They may face challenges in their living situations that increase the risk for disease transmission, which can result in outbreaks.
- **People who have weakened immune systems** because of illnesses or conditions (such as HIV) or medical treatment (such as chemotherapy) can get a more serious illness. A severe Shigella infection can spread into the blood, which can be life-threatening.

*The term “men who have sex with men” is used in Centers for Disease Control and Prevention surveillance systems to indicate men who engage in sexual behavior that may spread Shigella; it does not indicate how people identify their sexuality.

How to prevent a Shigella infection?

You can reduce your chance of getting infected by following these tips:

- **Carefully wash your hands with soap and water** during key times:
 - Before any sexual activity.
 - Before preparing food or eating.
 - After going to the bathroom, changing a diaper, or cleaning up after someone who went to the bathroom.
- **Take care when changing diapers.**
 - As soon as you change a diaper, throw it away in a covered, lined garbage can.
 - Clean up any leaks or spills from the diaper right away.
 - Wash your hands and the child’s hands with soap and water right away.
- **Avoid swallowing water** from ponds, lakes, creeks, or swimming pools.

- **When traveling internationally**, follow safe food and water habits and wash hands often with soap and water.
- **If you or your partner has been diagnosed with Shigella, do not have sex.** To reduce the chance of Shigella spreading, wait at least two weeks after diarrhea ends to have sex.

How to help prevent the spread of Shigella infection to others when you are sick?

- **Wash hands often**, especially:
 - Before eating or preparing food.
 - After using the bathroom or changing diapers.
- **Do NOT** prepare food if you are sick or share food with anyone.
- **Do NOT** swim in potentially contaminated water.
- **Do NOT** have sex for at least two weeks after you no longer have diarrhea.
- **Stay home** from school or from healthcare, food service, or childcare jobs while sick or until your health department says it's safe to return.

For more information, please visit [Shigella – Shigellosis | Shigella – Shigellosis | CDC](#).

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