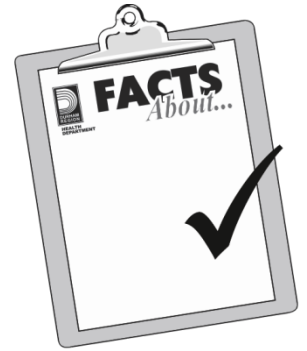




FACTS

About...



HEALTH DEPARTMENT



Shigellosis

What is it?

Shigellosis is a gastrointestinal illness caused by a group of bacteria called *Shigella*. Very few bacteria are needed to make you sick. In some people, especially young children and the older adults, diarrhea can be very severe and require them to go to the hospital. Outbreaks are common in children who are not toilet trained and in overcrowded settings with poor personal hygiene, food handling or water quality. For example, outbreaks are known to occur in jails and child care centres.

Shigellosis is a disease of public health significance and must be reported to the Health Department.

How is it spread?

If you are sick with the bacteria you can have it in your stool (feces) while you are sick and up to two weeks after you feel better. You can get it from other people who have the bacteria and have not washed their hands after using the washroom. They can spread it on the hands and food, water, and other surfaces. Since it takes so few bacteria to make you sick, it is easy to spread to other family members.

You can also get it from food and water that have the bacteria in it. Food can get the bacteria by a sick food handler that has not washed their hands properly, or when food is grown using water or sewage that has the bacteria in it, or when flies that breed in sewage land on the food. Drinking water and water used for bathing or swimming can get the bacteria if sewage gets into it. You can also get it sexually by anal-oral contact.

What do I look for?

You may start to feel sick after 12 hours to 1 week, but usually in about 1-3 days, after the bacteria gets into you. You can feel sick for 4 to 7 days. You may have diarrhea (that may be bloody), fever, nausea, vomiting, and stomach pain. You may have very mild symptoms or no symptoms at all but can still spread it to others.

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For more information

Durham Region Health Department

905-666-6241 1-800-841-2729 durham.ca

If you require this information in an accessible format, contact 1-800-841-2729.



How is it treated?

Usually, no treatment is required. However, for severe cases your doctor may prescribe antibiotics. If you are vomiting and have diarrhea, you should drink a lot of fluids. Fluids with water, sugar and salts (such as sport drinks) can help prevent dehydration.

How can I protect myself?

- Wash your hands well, with warm running water and soap, rubbing together for at least 15 seconds, after using the washroom, changing diapers, before eating and preparing foods.
- If you are travelling to developing countries, “boil it, cook it, peel it, or forget it”.
- If you are a food handler or care for children or hospitalized people, you should not work until 24 hours after you feel better and a stool sample tests negative for the bacteria. The Health Department can assist in testing by providing stool sample kits.
- Clean and disinfect diapering areas and surfaces every time you use it. Make sure dirty diapers are disposed properly. Children with diarrhea should not go to their child care centre.
- Be careful when you are cleaning up feces, for example, when changing dirty diapers and cleaning litter boxes.
- Always drink water from a safe supply. If you have a private well, test the water for bacteria at least four times per year. The Health Department will give you sample bottles and help you understand the results.
- If you are unsure of how safe your drinking water is, boil it for at least one minute and cool down before drinking or use bottled water.
- Do not attend swimming pools, hot tubs or water spray parks until 48 hours after you feel better.
- Do not eat shellfish such as clams, crabs, oysters, or mussels that have been exposed to sewage.
- Store potentially hazardous foods at either below 4°C or above 60°C; cook and reheat food thoroughly to the appropriate temperatures.
- Practice safer sex, including avoiding anal-oral contact with sexual partner(s).

More information can be obtained from

Durham Region Health Department, Environmental Help Line

905-723-3818 or 1-888-777-9613

August 8, 2018

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