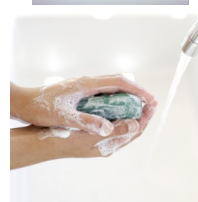


HAND WASHING FOR HEALTH'S SAKE

The end of summer is near and with a new school year starting, it is very important to take measures early to keep everyone in your home healthy. Taking precautions now to prevent the spread of Shigellosis will greatly reduce the number of days youngsters will miss school and day care this fall.

Shigellosis (*shig-el-lo-ses*) is a highly infectious form of dysentery caused by the *shigella* bacterium. Dysentery is a disease of the lower intestine caused by **infection with bacteria**, protozoa, or parasites and marked by severe diarrhea, inflammation, and the passage of bloody mucus. This highly infectious disease is most often spread by people who do not wash their hands after they have had contact with human fecal matter that is contaminated with the *shigella* bacterium.

The best way to **PREVENT** Shigellosis is regular **HAND WASHING!** Hand washing is especially important after using the restroom or changing diapers. **The spread of this disease is PREVENTABLE!**



How is Shigellosis spread?

- *Shigella* bacteria live in the gastrointestinal (GI) tract of infected people.
- Infected people may contaminate food or water sources when they do not wash their hands properly after using the restroom.
- When those without the disease come in direct contact with human feces, food, or water that is contaminated with *shigella* bacteria.

Who can get Shigellosis?

- **Anyone** can get the illness, although it is **most** common in children aged 2-4 years who attend daycare.

What are the signs and symptoms of Shigellosis?

- Abdominal pain
- Mild to moderate diarrhea (the stool may contain bloody mucous and resemble red currant jelly)
- Nausea
- Vomiting
- The disease is usually self-limiting and lasts an average of 4-7 days.

If you, or any member of your family, have any of these symptoms and have been in contact with someone with the disease, contact your healthcare provider or local health department.

Please Note: Certain types of *shigella* bacteria can cause severe illness with complications. It is **very important** to see your healthcare provider as soon as possible.



Prevention of Shigellosis

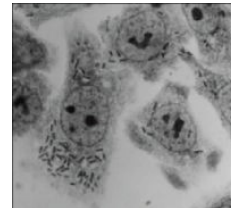
HANDWASHING IS THE #1 MEANS OF PREVENTING THE SPREAD OF SHIGELLOSIS!!!!!!!

Additional ways to prevent the spread of Shigellosis include

- Disposing of soiled diapers properly
- Disinfecting diaper changing areas after using them
- Keeping children with diarrhea out of child-care settings
- Supervising the hand washing of toddlers and small children after they use the toilet
- Regularly disinfecting toys used by multiple children
- Not preparing food for others if you have a diarrheal illness

More about Shigellosis

Each year, about 18,000 cases of Shigellosis are reported in the United States. However, the actual number of cases could be as much as twenty times greater due to many cases being mild and going unreported. Shigellosis is very common in areas where hygiene is poor and can continue to cause recurrent problems that can affect entire communities. Shigellosis is more common in the summer months than during winter months.



Courtesy Photo. Shigella flexneri, the rod-shaped bacteria that causes diarrhea, invades tissue culture cells in the laboratory much like bacteria invade the intestinal lining.

GET MOVING KENTUCKY! MONTHLY HEALTH TIP

Schedule time for your physical activity!



We schedule times for everything else in our lives, doctor's visits, dental check-ups, meetings at work, so why not schedule a time for physical activity. Planning ahead will increase your chances of sticking to your activity and making it a part of your routine. So schedule some time and *Get Moving!*

The September 2008 HEEL Monthly Health Bulletin was prepared by Peggy Riley, RN, MSN, University of Kentucky Cooperative Extension HEEL Program Health Specialist for Nursing, University of Kentucky Colleges of Agriculture and Nursing.

For more information on health issues in Kentucky, contact your local county Extension agent or visit the HEEL website at:

www.ca.uky.edu/HEEL

Sources:

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