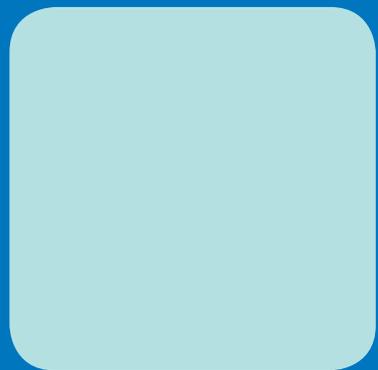
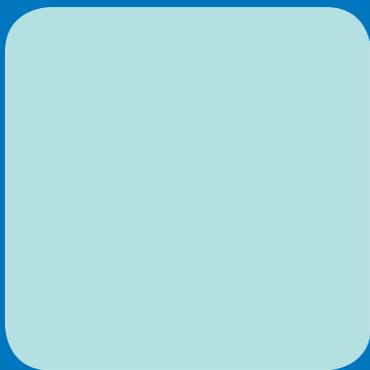


Shigellosis



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Shigellosis



What is Shigellosis?

Shigellosis is caused by a type of highly contagious bacteria called *Shigella* that causes an infection in the bowel. It is also known as **Bacillary Dysentery**. There are four types - *Shigella sonnei* (most common type seen in the UK), *Shigella flexnerii*, *Shigella dysenteriae* and *Shigella boydii*.



How do you get infected with Shigella?

The bacteria can be found in the bowels of people and other animals that have or are recovering from the infection. You can become infected by contact with other people who have the illness, through inadequate hand washing after using the toilet and/or before handling food, particularly in households, nurseries and infant schools. It is also possible to pick up the infection by eating contaminated cooked food or unwashed vegetables including salad. Another way to acquire this infection is to drink or swim in untreated water e.g. rivers, wells, springs or burns.

How can you avoid getting or passing on Shigella?

Hand washing is the most important way to stop the spread of infection.

- Wash your hands thoroughly with soap and warm water:
 - before preparing, handling and eating food.
 - after handling raw food especially meat or poultry.
 - after going to the toilet.
 - after changing a baby's nappy.
 - after contact with pets and other animals.
 - by ensuring young children wash their hands.
- Avoid sharing towels.
- Where possible, stay away from other people until your symptoms have stopped.
- Do not prepare food for others until you've been symptom free for at least 48 hours.
- Avoid sexual contact until you have been symptom free for at least 48 hours.
- Pay particular attention to hygiene during farm visits, washing hands after any contact with animals, and eating only in designated areas.



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What are the symptoms of Shigella and how long do they last?

Symptoms include to very severe diarrhoea (often watery, sometimes containing mucus or pus or blood in severe cases), fever, abdominal pain, feeling sick and vomiting. The illness may last for only a day or continue for one to two weeks. The incubation period (the time taken from coming into contact with the bug until the illness starts) is usually one to three days but can be up to a week.

How do you treat Shigella?

Since most people who have Shigellosis do not have symptoms for long antibiotics are only needed if the symptoms do not clear up on their own. It is important to drink fluids to replace the water through the sickness and diarrhoea especially for vulnerable groups i.e. babies, children and the elderly.

If a young child has symptoms or if your symptoms continue or a particularly severe consult your GP or seek medical advice from NHS 24 111 Service.



Do you need to stay off work or school?

Yes. While you are ill and have symptoms, you are infectious. You can return to work or school once you have been free from diarrhoea for 48 hours. The type of Shigella you have and whether or not you are in a risk group will influence how long you need to stay away.

You should tell your employer you have had a Shigella infection if you work with vulnerable groups such as the elderly, the young, those in poor health, or handle food.



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Public Health England, Environmental Health Team and Shigella

Public Health England is an executive agency of the Department of Health and Social Care who provide advice on controlling outbreaks of infectious diseases. Their work involves trying to identify the source of infections to prevent other people becoming infected. They also monitor outbreaks and look for patterns and trends. This work is undertaken with assistance from local Environmental Health Teams within Councils. These teams are notified of infectious diseases by Pathology laboratories and contact patients to obtain as much information about their illness as possible to try to identify how the infection was acquired, offer advice and prevent the spread of illness.

If you would like further information, please contact the Food & Public Protection Team at Carlisle City Council on **01228 817329**.

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