

## Shigellosis

Shigellosis is an infection caused by *Shigella* bacteria. Anyone can get shigellosis, but it mainly occurs among children age 5 and younger. *Shigella* bacteria cause about 500,000 infections in the U.S. each year.

### Transmission

*Shigella* bacteria can spread easily and quickly, especially among young children at home and in school. Anyone can get shigellosis when the bacteria enters their mouth, which can occur by:

- Eating food or drinking a beverage that has been prepared or touched by someone who has shigellosis and contaminates the food or beverage with bacteria.
- Touching surfaces, such as toys, bathroom fixtures, doorknobs and diaper changing tables, that have the bacteria on them.
- Having direct contact with feces (stool), such as changing the diaper of a child with shigellosis or caring for someone with shigellosis.
- Swallowing contaminated water while swimming or playing.

### Symptoms

Shigellosis symptoms may appear one to seven days after exposure and usually last seven days. Symptoms can include:

- Mild or severe diarrhea (there may be blood or mucus in the stool)
- Stomachache or stomach cramps
- Fever
- Feeling the need to pass stool, even when your bowels are empty
- Nausea

Some people with shigellosis may have no symptoms at all.

### Prevention

To prevent the spread of *Shigella* bacteria at home and in your community:

- Stay home when sick and keep children who are sick home from child care and school.
- Wash your hands often with soap and warm water for at least 20 seconds, especially before eating or preparing food and after using the bathroom or changing a diaper.
  - Help children wash their hands often. Use hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol when soap and water are not available.
- Do not prepare or share food or drinks when sick.
- If a child is sick, they should not share toys with others.
- Do not share towels.

- Clean and disinfect all objects and surfaces that may have been used or touched by someone with shigellosis (such as toys, doorknobs, handrails, tables, sinks, cups and diaper changing tables).

### **Treatment**

Most people with shigellosis get better on their own in five to seven days. In serious cases, your health care provider may prescribe antibiotics to treat your illness. If you have shigellosis, make sure to:

- Rest.
- Stay hydrated by drinking plenty of fluids, such as water or electrolyte drinks.
- Contact your provider if you are still sick after seven days or get dry skin, mouth or eyes.

For help finding a provider, call **311** or 844-NYC-4NYC (844-692-4692).

For more information, call **311** or visit [nyc.gov/health](https://www.nyc.gov/health) and search for **shigellosis**.