

What Do I Need to Know about *Shigella*?

In Saginaw and Genesee Counties

What is *Shigella*?

Shigella is a germ that causes a disease called shigellosis. People sick with shigellosis may have diarrhea and other symptoms, like stomach cramps and fever. In most cases, sick people will get better on their own within 5 to 7 days, but the germ can cause more severe illness in people who are already sick with other diseases.



How do People Get Sick with *Shigella* bacteria?



Shigella bacteria spread when people put something in their mouths or swallow something that has come into contact with the stool (poop) of a person infected with *Shigella* bacteria. The most common way *Shigella* spreads in the United States is from one person to another, such as:

- In childcare settings;
- When caring for people who are sick with diarrhea; and
- After changing diapers.

Is *Shigella* Bacteria Spreading in My Community?

Between March 1, 2016, and October 26, 2016, at least 177 cases of shigellosis have been reported throughout Saginaw and Genesee counties, which is higher than the number of cases seen during the same period in previous years. The number of new cases peaked in early July and slowed considerably in September. Many of the people who got sick are children. CDC is working with state and local health officials, community residents, and partner organizations to learn more about how people might be getting sick in these communities.



How Can I Avoid Getting Sick with *Shigella*?



Shigella germs can spread very easily from person to person, so the single best thing you can do to keep from getting sick is to wash your hands with soap and water—especially after using the bathroom, after changing a child’s diapers, and before preparing food.

If soap and water are not available, you can use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol. Hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol is effective in killing *Shigella* germs. But use soap and water

as soon as possible afterwards because hand sanitizer does not kill all types of germs and may not be as effective if hands are visibly greasy or dirty. Other products like baby wipes do not completely remove germs and are not recommended for cleaning hands.

What Should I Do If I Think I am Sick with *Shigella*?

If you or one of your family members have the symptoms of shigellosis, such as diarrhea, fever, and a stomachache, visit your doctor and ask about testing for *Shigella*. Your doctor can order a test that will show whether you or one of your family members are sick from *Shigella*. It is also important to drink fluids to stay hydrated and wash hands often with soap and water to keep from spreading the sickness to others.



For more information, visit www.cdc.gov/shigella