

EPI Update Alert for Wednesday, December 9, 2015
Center for Acute Disease Epidemiology (CADE)
Iowa Department of Public Health (IDPH)

***Shigella* activity on the rise again in Iowa**

Shigella activity is increasing again in Iowa. Activity is highest in Dubuque, Polk and Scott counties. More than 30 infections have been reported in each of the three counties over the last several months. IDPH recommends collecting a stool specimen and testing for Shigella in patients with consistent symptoms. Symptoms include watery or bloody diarrhea, abdominal pain, fever, and malaise.

A very small dose of Shigella is needed to cause illness (probably 10 – 100 organisms); thus, it can be easily spread via food, water or directly from one person to another. Person-to-person spread typically occurs among household contacts, children in child care, and in residential facilities. Secondary attack rate in households can be as high as 40 percent.

According to the CDC, diarrhea caused by Shigella usually resolves without antibiotic treatment in five to seven days. People with mild shigellosis typically need only fluids and rest. Bismuth subsalicylate (e.g., Pepto-Bismol®) may be helpful, but medications that cause intestinal motility to slow, such as loperamide (e.g., Imodium®) or diphenoxylate with atropine (e.g., Lomotil®), should be avoided. Antibiotics are useful for severe cases of shigellosis as this can reduce the duration of symptoms; however, Shigella is often resistant to antibiotics. If antibiotic treatment is required, a stool culture should be considered to determine which antibiotics are likely to work. Antibiotics may also reduce the duration of infectivity.

The following exclusion recommendations are made for Shigella:

Child Care:

- Children with Shigella infection who have diarrhea should be excluded until their diarrhea is gone and one negative stool culture is obtained.
- If treated with antibiotics, wait 48 hours after completion of antibiotics before obtaining the stool specimen.

Schools:

- Students or non-food-handling staff with Shigella infection who have diarrhea should be excluded until their diarrhea is gone.
- Students or staff who handle food and have Shigella infection must not prepare food until their diarrhea is gone and they have two negative stool tests (submitted at least 48 hours after completion of antibiotic therapy if antibiotics are given, and taken at least 24 hours apart).

Food Service Workers:

According to the food code, persons who handle and serve food and have Shigella infection must not prepare food until their diarrhea is gone and they have two negative stool tests (submitted at least 48 hours after completion of antibiotic therapy if antibiotics are given, and taken at least 24 hours apart).

For additional information visit:

www.idph.iowa.gov/cade/disease-information/shigella
wiki.idph.iowa.gov/epimanual/Home/CategoryID/111#tab292
www.cdc.gov/shigella/index.html