

# GRAYSON COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT



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## Public Health Information Bulletin Shigella Infections (Shigellosis) Fall 2013

Shigellosis is an infectious disease of the digestive system caused by a group of bacteria called Shigella. Most people who are infected with Shigella develop diarrhea, fever, and stomach cramps starting a day or two after they swallow the bacteria. The diarrhea is often bloody. Shigellosis usually goes away in 4 to 7 days. Persons with shigellosis in the United States rarely require hospitalization. A severe infection with high fever may be associated with seizures in children less than 2 years old. Some persons who are infected may have no symptoms at all, but may still pass the Shigella bacteria to others.

Many different kinds of germs can cause diarrhea. Bacteria like salmonella, E. coli, and shigella are common causes of intestinal infections, but several kinds of viruses also can be responsible. If you or your child develops diarrhea which does not clear up quickly, see your doctor or other health care provider. A stool test ordered by your doctor will reveal which type of germ is responsible, and whether an antibiotic will help. The following symptoms may indicate a shigella infection:

- Diarrhea that may contain mucus and blood
- Fever
- Stomach cramps
- Nausea

Tips for preventing the spread of shigellosis include:

- Wash hands with soap carefully and frequently, especially after going to the bathroom, after changing diapers, and before preparing foods or beverages
- Dispose of soiled diapers properly
- Disinfect diaper changing areas after using them
- Keep children with diarrhea out of child care settings
- Supervise handwashing of toddlers and small children after they use the toilet
- Do not prepare food for others while ill with diarrhea
- Avoid swallowing water from ponds, lakes, or untreated pools

If you need additional information about shigellosis, please contact the Grayson County Health Department at 903 893-0131, or contact your child's school nurse.

