

Escherichia coli (E. coli)

Knowing the facts



E.coli 0157:H7 is an emerging foodborne illness. While most strains are harmless and live in the intestines of healthy humans and animals, this particular strain produces a powerful toxin that can cause severe illness.

Did You Know?

E. coli is a bacteria and was first identified as a cause of illness in 1982.



How is e.coli spread?

-By eating meat (especially ground beef) that is not thoroughly cooked or by drinking unpasteurized milk. Outbreaks from consuming contaminated apple cider, raw vegetables, alfalfa sprouts, salami, yogurt, and water have also occurred.

-E.coli leaves the body through the stool of an infected person and enters into another person when contaminated hands, food, or objects are placed in the mouth, or by drinking feces-contaminated water.

-Spread may also occur whether or not a person feels sick. For example, it is easy for diapered children to pass intestinal infections to others. Anyone who does not wash his or her hands after using the toilet or changing diapers can spread disease.

What are the symptoms?

Watery or bloody diarrhea, abdominal cramps, and/or low-grade fever. Sometimes there are no symptoms.

How soon do symptoms appear?

Usually 2 to 10 days, with a median of 3 to 4 days.

When and how long is a person able to spread e.coli?

As long as *E. coli* is present in the stool, a person can be a possible source of disease spread.

What is the treatment for e.coli?

Most persons recover without antibiotics or other specific treatment in 5 – 10 days. There is no evidence that treatment improves the course of the disease and may precipitate kidney complications. In general, Anti-diarrheal medications should be avoided– consult with your healthcare provider before taking these if you think you may have E.coli.

How do I prevent the spread of e.coli?

- Thoroughly cook all meats inside as heat kills the bacteria. Clean all fruits and vegetables well before eating them. Do not drink unpasteurized milk or eat cheese made with unpasteurized milk.
- Wash hands thoroughly with soap and running water after using the toilet, changing diapers, and before preparing or eating food. Thorough hand washing is the best way to prevent spread of infectious diseases found in the intestinal tract. Help children to wash hands as well. Keep up good hand washing even after symptoms have stopped as you could still have the bacteria in your body.
- Clean and disinfect contaminated areas (toilets, diapering areas, faucets) daily or when soiled. Sanitize toys as needed and at least daily.
- Your doctor should report your illness to local health department.

Health Alert: E. coli

Date: _____

Dear Parent or Guardian

An individual at _____ has been diagnosed or is undergoing evaluation for an illness due to Escherichia Coli (E.coli), which can cause an infection of the intestines. These bacteria are found in the digestive tracts of some beef and dairy cattle, where they get into milk or meat during the slaughtering process. In humans, the bacteria produces a toxin that can cause diarrhea. In rare cases, people can develop hemolytic uremic syndrome (HUS), which is a serious complication of E.coli 0157:H7 infection. HUS is more common in children than in adults.

Watch for these symptoms:

-People infected with E.coli can have no symptoms at all or they can be ill with watery or severe bloody diarrhea, abdominal cramps, and low-grade fever.

-It usually takes from 1-7 days, usually about 2 –4 days, from the time a person comes in contact with the bacteria until symptoms develop.

How it is spread:

-These bacteria can be easily spread from person to person, especially from children in diapers. Spread can occur when a person doesn't wash his/her hands well after using the toilet or changing diapers.

-By eating a food or drink that is not thoroughly cooked or has been contaminated with E. coli.

-The bacteria can be found in the stool of a person who has E. coli for about one week possibly as long as 2-8 weeks after the start of symptoms.

Diagnosis and Treatment:

There is a lab test to check for E. coli in the stool. Most persons recover without antibiotics or other specific treatment in 5 – 10 days. Antibiotics and drugs to stop the bacteria are generally not recommended. Check with your medical provider about these things if you think you or your child may have symptoms of E. coli .

Prevention and Controlling the Spread:

-Thoroughly cook all meats inside as heat kills the bacteria. Clean all fruits and vegetables well before eating them. Do not drink unpasteurized milk or eat cheese made with unpasteurized milk.

-Children with diarrhea due to E. coli should not return to the child care or school setting until diarrhea and other symptoms are no longer present or they have been treated and cleared by their medical provider to return.

-Wash hands thoroughly with soap and running water after using the toilet, changing diapers, and before preparing or eating food. Thorough hand washing is the best way to prevent spread of infectious diseases found in the intestinal tract. Help children to wash hands as well. Keep up good hand washing even after symptoms have stopped as you could still have the bacteria in your body.

-Clean and disinfect contaminated areas (toilets, diapering areas, faucets) daily or when soiled. Sanitize toys as needed and at least daily.

-Your doctor should report your illness to local health department.

Enterovirus

Knowing the facts



Enteroviruses cause a variety of illnesses and usually occur during the summer and fall. These viruses often cause mild infections such as colds, sore throats, and intestinal illness. Less often, they cause pneumonia, meningitis or encephalitis, or they may affect the eyes and heart.

Did You Know?

These illnesses are often caused by viruses in the coxsackievirus, echovirus, and enterovirus families.



How are enteroviruses spread?

Enteroviruses leave the body through the stool of an infected person and enter another person when hands, food or objects (such as toys) contaminated with stool, are placed in the mouth. Also, enteroviruses can be spread through droplets that are expelled from the nose and mouth during sneezing and coughing.

What are the symptoms?

Cold-like symptoms, sore throat, mouth sores, fever, rash, vomiting and diarrhea are most common. Some may have no symptoms.

How soon do symptoms appear?

It usually takes 3-6 days from time of exposure until symptoms begin.

What is the treatment for enteroviruses?

- No specific therapy for enteroviral infections exists.
- Specimens for viral isolation may be obtained by a physician from the throat and rectum and any sites of clinical involvement. Attempts to recover the virus are particularly important in patients with serious illness during outbreaks.

How do I prevent the spread of enteroviruses?

- Wash hands thoroughly with soap and running water after using the toilet, changing diapers, and before preparing or eating food. Thorough hand washing is the best way to prevent spread of infectious diseases found in the intestinal tract. Help children to wash hands as well. Keep up good hand washing even after symptoms have stopped.
- Clean and disinfect contaminated areas (toilets, diapering areas, faucets) daily or when soiled. Sanitize toys as needed and at least daily.
- Practice good cough and sneeze habits by coughing and sneezing into your elbow or sleeve. If you do use a tissue throw it away and wash your hands. Encourage children not to touch their eyes, nose or mouth.

Health Alert: Enteroviruses

Date: _____

Dear Parent or Guardian

An individual at _____ has been diagnosed or is undergoing evaluation for an illness due to an enterovirus. Some of these illnesses are often called stomach-flu and are common among young children. Enteroviruses cause a variety of illnesses and usually occur during the summer and fall. These viruses often cause mild infections such as colds, sore throats, and intestinal illness. Less often, the cause pneumonia, meningitis or encephalitis, or they may affect the eyes and heart. These illnesses are often caused by viruses in the coxsackievirus, echovirus, and enterovirus families.

Watch for these symptoms:

Cold-like symptoms, sore throat, mouth sores, fever, rash, vomiting and diarrhea are most common. Some may have no symptoms. It usually takes 3-6 days from time of exposure until symptoms begin.

How it is spread:

Enterovirus leave the body through the stool of an infected person and enter another person when hands, food or objects (such as toys) contaminated with stool, are placed in the mouth. Also, enteroviruses can be spread through droplets that are expelled from the nose and mouth during sneezing and coughing.

Diagnosis and Treatment:

- No specific therapy for enteroviral infections exists.
- Specimens for viral isolation may be obtained by a physician from the throat and rectum and any sites of clinical involvement. Attempts to recover the virus are particularly important in patients with serious illness during outbreaks.

Prevention and Controlling the Spread:

- Wash hands thoroughly with soap and running water after using the toilet, changing diapers, and before preparing or eating food. Thorough hand washing is the best way to prevent spread of infectious diseases found in the intestinal tract. Help children to wash hands as well. Keep up good hand washing even after symptoms have stopped.
- Clean and disinfect contaminated areas (toilets, diapering areas, faucets) daily or when soiled. Sanitize toys as needed and at least daily.
- Practice good cough and sneeze habits by coughing and sneezing into your elbow or sleeve. If you do use a tissue throw it away and wash your hands. Encourage children not to touch their eyes, nose or mouth.

Giardia

and Prevention of Recreational Water Illnesses

Knowing the facts



Giardiasis, is an infection of the intestines caused by the parasite *giardia lamblia*. This illness is common in children under two years of age. Epidemics have occurred in child care settings and other similar settings where there are children in diapers.



Did You Know?

Giardia is often associated with swimming in lakes or ponds-it (as well as some other diarrheal illnesses) is often referred to as a recreational water illness.

How is giardia spread?

Giardia leaves the body through the stool of an infected person and enters another person when contaminated hands, food, or objects such as toys are placed in the mouth. Spread can occur whether or not a person feels sick.

What are the symptoms?

Gas, stomach cramps and bloating, nausea, diarrhea (persistent or recurring), and weight loss. Sometimes children do not show symptoms. Disease lasts 2-6 weeks in otherwise healthy people.

How soon do symptoms appear?

Usually 1-2 weeks after coming in contact and becoming infected with giardia.

When and how long is a person able to spread giardia?

Giardia is very contagious. You can pass giardia to someone else for several weeks after diarrhea has stopped so careful handwashing is important and do not swim for at least 2 weeks after you have had giardia to prevent passing it along to others in swimming pools or other recreational water facilities.

What is the treatment for giardia?

Discuss this letter with your physician if you or your child has persistent diarrhea. It is recommended that children who have symptoms of giardiasis have their stools tested; treatment is available such as prescription drugs.

How do I prevent the spread of giardia and other recreational water illnesses?

- Children or individuals with diarrhea due to giardia should not return to the child care or school setting until diarrhea and other symptoms are no longer present or they have been treated and cleared by their medical provider to return.
- Wash hands thoroughly with soap and running water after using the toilet, changing diapers, and before preparing or eating food. Thorough hand washing is the best way to prevent spread of infectious diseases found in the intestinal tract. Help children to wash hands as well. Keep up good hand washing even after symptoms have stopped.
- Clean and disinfect contaminated areas (toilets, diapering areas, faucets) daily or when soiled. Sanitize toys as needed and at least daily.
- Your doctor should report your giardia illness to local health department.

These are the 6 Plea-s from the Centers for Disease Control to prevent Recreational Water Illnesses:

1. **Please** don't swim when you have diarrhea.
2. **Please** don't swallow the pool water.
3. **Please** practice good hygiene. Take a shower before swimming and wash your hands after using the toilet or changing diapers.
4. **Please** take your kids on bathroom breaks or check diapers often.
5. **Please** change diapers in a bathroom and not at poolside.
6. **Please** wash your child thoroughly (especially the rear end) with soap and water before swimming.

Health Alert: Giardia

Date: _____

Dear Parent or Guardian

An individual at _____ has been diagnosed or is undergoing evaluation for an illness due to Giardiasis, which can cause an infection of the intestines caused by the parasite *giardia lamblia*. This illness is common in children under two years of age. Epidemics have occurred in child care settings where there are children in diapers. You can get giardia from another person who has giardia, from drinking water from contaminated stream, creek, lake or water source, or by eating food that has been contaminated by someone who has giardia and did not wash their hands after using the bathroom.

Watch for these symptoms:

Gas, stomach cramps and bloating, nausea, diarrhea (persistent or recurring), and weight loss. Sometimes children do not show symptoms. Disease lasts 2-6 weeks in otherwise healthy people.

How it is spread:

-Giardia leaves the body through the stool of an infected person and enters another person when contaminated hands, food, or objects such as toys are placed in the mouth.

-Spread can occur whether or not a person feels sick.

For Example: It is easy for children in diapers to pass intestinal infections to others, but anyone who doesn't not wash his or her hands after using a toilet or changing diapers can spread the disease.

Diagnosis and Treatment:

Discuss this letter with your physician if you or your child has persistent diarrhea. It is recommended that children who have symptoms of giardiasis have their stools tested; treatment is available such as prescription drugs.

Prevention and Controlling the Spread:

-Children or individuals with diarrhea due to giardia should not return to the child care or school setting until diarrhea and other symptoms are no longer present or they have been treated and cleared by their medical provider to return.

-Wash hands thoroughly with soap and running water after using the toilet, changing diapers, and before preparing or eating food. Thorough hand washing is the best way to prevent spread of infectious diseases found in the intestinal tract. Help children to wash hands as well. Keep up good hand washing even after symptoms have stopped.

-Clean and disinfect contaminated areas (toilets, diapering areas, faucets) daily or when soiled. Sanitize toys as needed and at least daily.

-Your doctor should report your illness to local health department.

Pinworms

Knowing the facts

A pinworm ("threadworm") is a small, thin, white roundworm (nematode) called *Enterobius vermicularis* (EN-ter-O-be-us ver-MIK-u-lar-is) that sometimes lives in the colon and rectum of humans. Pinworms are about the length of a staple. While an infected person sleeps, female pinworms leave the intestine through the anus and deposit their eggs on the surrounding skin.

Did You Know?

While a pinworm infection may sound alarming, it is the most common intestinal worm infection in the U.S. They are most often found in preschool and school-aged children and mothers of infected children.

What are the symptoms?

-Rectal (bottom) itching; especially at night; irritability; disturbed sleep. Worms may be visible around the rectum upon waking or in the stool. If you suspect your child or family member has pinworms, contact your physician.

How's it spread?

-Pinworm eggs are taken into the mouth when a person fails to wash hands after scratching the rectal area, using the toilet, or handling contaminated pajamas, underwear, or bedding.

-Food or other can be contaminated in the same way. It is less common but even eggs floating in the air can be swallowed and cause infection.

How soon do symptoms appear?

Pinworm eggs become infective within a few hours after being deposited on the skin around the anus and can survive for 2 to 3 weeks on clothing, bedding, or other objects.

When and for how long is a person able to spread pinworms?

-Infection usually lasts about 2-6 weeks.

What is the treatment?

Your physician can prescribe the proper medication, which is usually given once and repeated in two weeks. In some situations, families or people living in group home settings may need to be treated as a group as re-infection is common among household members.

How do I prevent the spread of Pinworms?

-Children or individuals with pinworms should be excluded from childcare or school until 24 hours after treatment begins.

-Wash hands and fingernails of children thoroughly with soap and running water after using the toilet, after contact with the rectal area, and before eating or preparing food.

-Discourage scratching or touching bare rectal area and nail biting, keep nails short

-Bathe every morning (shower preferred) followed by a clean change of underclothing

-After treatment, wash bed linens and night clothes (do not shake)

-Clean and vacuum house daily for several days— open blinds and curtains as eggs are sensitive to light.

Health Alert: Pinworms

Date: _____

Dear Parent or Guardian

An individual at _____ has been diagnosed or is undergoing evaluation for an illness due to pinworms. While a pinworm infection may sound alarming, it is the most common intestinal worm infection in the U.S. They are most often found in preschool and school-aged children and mothers of infected children.

Watch for these symptoms:

-Rectal (bottom) itching; especially at night; irritability; disturbed sleep. Worms may be visible around the rectum upon waking or in the stool. If you suspect your child or family member has pinworms, contact your physician.

-Infection usually lasts about 2-6 weeks. Eggs can remain infectious outside the body for two-three weeks.

How it is spread:

-Pinworm eggs are taken into the mouth when a person fails to wash hands after scratching the rectal area, using the toilet, or handling contaminated pajamas, underwear, or bedding.

-Food or other can be contaminated in the same way. It is less common but even eggs floating in the air can be swallowed and cause infection.

Diagnosis and Treatment:

Your physician can prescribe the proper medication, which is usually given once and repeated in two weeks. In some situations, families or people living in group home settings may need to be treated as a group as re-infection is common among household members.

Prevention and Controlling the Spread:

-Children or individuals with pinworms should be excluded from childcare or school until 24 hours after treatment begins.

-Wash hands and fingernails of children thoroughly with soap and running water after using the toilet, after contact with the rectal area, and before eating or preparing food.

-Discourage scratching or touching bare rectal area and nail biting, keep nails short

-Bathe every morning (shower preferred) followed by a clean change of underclothing

-After treatment, wash bed linens and night clothes (do not shake)

-Clean and vacuum house daily for several days— open blinds and curtains as eggs are sensitive to light.

How do I prevent the spread of foodborne illness like Salmonella, E. coli and other gastrointestinal or diarrheal illnesses?

- Wash hands thoroughly with soap and running water after using the toilet, changing diapers, and before preparing or eating food. Thorough handwashing is the best way to prevent the spread of infectious diseases found in the intestinal tract. Help children to wash hands as well.
- Clean and disinfect* contaminated areas (toilets, diapering areas, faucets) daily or when soiled. Sanitize** toys as needed and at least daily. Use a dishwasher to disinfect dishes or toys.
- People are far more likely to contract foodborne illness at home than in a restaurant, so food must be handled safely. Salmonella, E. coli and other bacteria are killed when food is thoroughly cooked. This means cooking ground beef to at least 155 degrees and making sure **all** food is cooked properly. Once cooked, any food held in a buffet must be kept hotter than 140 degrees. Cross-contamination (when food is contaminated in the kitchen after it has been cooked) may be avoided by using different utensils, plates, cutting boards and counter tops before and after cooking. Cooked food that stands at room temperature for a long time, especially poultry, is at risk.
- Defrost frozen food in the refrigerator or microwave. Refrigerator temperatures must be kept colder than 40 degrees. Rinse poultry in cold water before cooking. Avoid raw milk, raw hamburger meat, and raw eggs (many recipes, such as those for homemade ice cream, call for eggs with no subsequent cooking; substitute pasteurized eggs in these recipes). Food contaminated with salmonella may look, smell, and taste normal.
- Because fruits and vegetables have now been identified as a source of salmonella, it is important that these food items be thoroughly washed in running water before they are eaten.
- Wash utensils and wooden cutting boards thoroughly with hot, soapy water. Salmonella may lie dormant for a year or more and then "wake up" when food is present. They also may live in the cut marks on a wooden cutting board. Use an acrylic board that can go in the dishwasher. Rub down or spray wooden boards with a solution of one ounce bleach to one gallon water and allow to air dry. Cutting boards for raw meat and poultry should not be used for cheese, raw vegetables and other foods that will not be cooked before being served.
- Your doctor should report an illness caused by Salmonella or E. coli to the local health department.

Cleaning or wiping objects and surfaces of all visible soiling or contaminate (food particles, dirt, sand, etc.) is needed before disinfecting or sanitizing occurs.

*To disinfect clean, non-food contact surfaces: use a solution of household bleach and water – 8 teaspoons bleach in a gallon of water. To make a smaller amount in a spray bottle, use 2 teaspoons bleach in a quart of water. Prepare solution fresh daily as it quickly loses its ability to kill germs. Saturate area with solution. Air dry. Do NOT rinse.

**To sanitize mouthed toys or eating utensils: boil, use a dishwasher, or soak clean items for 2 minutes in a weak bleach solution – 3 teaspoons bleach added to 1 gallon water (or a scant teaspoon in a quart). Air dry. Do NOT rinse. This solution can also be used to disinfect clean kitchen surfaces.

Salmonella

Knowing the facts

Salmonella is a general name for a group of about 2,000 closely related bacteria that cause illness by reproducing in the digestive tract. Each salmonella subgroup, or serotype, shares common antigens and has its own name.

Did You Know?

Salmonella bacteria cause much of the food poisoning in the world, including an estimated 4 million cases of salmonellosis in the U.S. each year.

What are the symptoms?

Nausea, diarrhea, abdominal cramps, fever, headache, sometimes vomiting.

How's it spread?

-Usually the illness comes from food contaminated with animal feces found on or in raw meats, eggs, fish and shellfish, and, most commonly, in poultry. Salmonella also may be found in raw milk or in milk that is contaminated after pasteurization. The bacteria also may be carried by pets as birds, fish, dogs, cats and turtles.

-Person-to-person transmission of salmonella occurs when a carrier's feces, unwashed from his or her hands, contaminates water or food during preparation, or through direct contact with another person.

How soon do symptoms appear?

Symptoms generally appear within 12-36 hours, can be up to 72 hours

When and for how long is a person able to spread salmonella?

As long as infectious germs are present in the stool, a person can be a possible source of disease spread.

What is the treatment?

Most cases of salmonellosis are not treated with antibiotics. In fact, antibiotics may prolong the period during which the person can infect others. Also, antibiotics actually may bring on salmonellosis symptoms by upsetting the bacterial balance in the intestines. Antibiotics sometimes are prescribed for infants, the chronically ill and the elderly to prevent salmonella-triggered local infections or bacteremia. Antibiotics also are needed when the bacteria cause meningitis or infections of the blood stream.

How do I prevent the spread of Salmonella?

-Because foods of animal origin may be contaminated with *Salmonella*, people should not eat raw or undercooked eggs, poultry, or meat. Poultry and meat, including hamburgers, should be well-cooked, not pink in the middle. Persons also should not consume raw or unpasteurized milk or other dairy products. Produce should be thoroughly washed.

-Wash hands thoroughly with soap and running water after using the toilet, changing diapers, and before preparing or eating food. Good hand washing is the best way to prevent spread of infectious diseases found in the intestinal tract. Help children to wash hands as well. Keep up good hand washing even after symptoms have stopped as you could still have the bacteria in your body. Because reptiles are particularly likely to have *Salmonella*, and it can contaminate their skin, everyone should immediately wash their hands after handling reptiles or other animals.

-Your doctor should report your illness to local health department.

Health Alert: Salmonella

Date: _____

Dear Parent or Guardian

An individual at _____ has been diagnosed or is undergoing evaluation for an illness due to Salmonella which can cause an infection of the intestines. These bacteria can live and grow in the digestive tract of humans and can also be caused by contact with contaminated foods or carried by pets.

Watch for these symptoms:

Diarrhea, nausea, sometimes vomiting; abdominal cramps, fever, headache, sometimes vomiting. Incubation period lasts 6-72 hours, usually about 12-36.

How it is spread:

-Usually the illness comes from food contaminated with animal feces found on or in raw meats, eggs, fish and shellfish, and, most commonly, in poultry. Salmonella also may be found in raw milk or in milk that is contaminated after pasteurization. The bacteria also may be carried by pets as birds, fish, dogs, cats and turtles.

-Person-to-person transmission of salmonella occurs when a carrier's feces, unwashed from his or her hands, contaminates water or food during preparation, or through direct contact with another person.

-As long as infectious germs are present in the stool, a person can be a possible source of disease spread.

Diagnosis and Treatment:

There are lab tests to check for Salmonella. Discuss this letter with your physician if you or your child has diarrhea and fever or persistent diarrhea. present. In general, antibiotics should not be taken in uncomplicated cases of salmonella as they may prolong the excretion of the bacteria in the stool. Antibiotics should be taken only when prescribed by a doctor. Contact a medical doctor and seek emergency room treatment immediately for severe symptoms. Usually the disease will run its course within 2-3 days.

Prevention and Controlling the Spread:

-Because foods of animal origin may be contaminated with *Salmonella*, people should not eat raw or undercooked eggs, poultry, or meat. Poultry and meat, including hamburgers, should be well-cooked, not pink in the middle. Persons also should not consume raw or unpasteurized milk or other dairy products. Produce should be thoroughly washed.

-Wash hands thoroughly with soap and running water after using the toilet, changing diapers, and before preparing or eating food. Good hand washing is the best way to prevent spread of infectious diseases found in the intestinal tract. Help children to wash hands as well. Keep up good hand washing even after symptoms have stopped as you could still have the bacteria in your body. Because reptiles are particularly likely to have Salmonella, and it can contaminate their skin, everyone should immediately wash their hands after handling reptiles or other animals.

-Your doctor should report your illness to local health department.

Shigella

Knowing the facts

Shigellosis is an infectious disease caused by bacteria that can live and grow in the digestive tract of humans. Shigella is a germ that is from a family of bacteria that can cause diarrhea in humans. They are microscopic living creatures that pass from person to person.

Did You Know?

Shigella were discovered over 100 years ago by a Japanese scientist named Shiga, for whom they are named. There are several different kinds of *Shigella* bacteria: *Shigella sonnei*, also known as "Group D" *Shigella*, accounts for over two-thirds of shigellosis in the United States. *Shigella flexneri*, or "group B" *Shigella*, accounts for almost all the rest.

What are the symptoms?

Diarrhea, sometimes bloody; fever; nausea, sometimes vomiting; abdominal cramps, fever, headache, sometimes vomiting. Symptoms can last 12-96 hours (usually about 5-7 days) up to a week.

How's it spread?

-Shigella leaves the body through the stool of an infected person and enters another person when contaminated hands, food, or objects are placed in the mouth, or by drinking feces-contaminated water. Very little of the organism is needed to become infected.

-Spread may also occur whether or not a person feels sick.

For Example, it is easy for diapered children to pass intestinal infections to others, but anyone who does not wash his or her hands after using the toilet or changing diapers can spread disease.

How soon do symptoms appear?

Usually 1-2 days after a person is exposed to the bacteria.

When and for how long is a person able to spread shigella?

As long as infectious germs are present in the stool, a person can be a possible source of disease spread. People can spread shigella to others for a week or 2 after symptoms stop so careful handwashing is important.

What is the treatment?

There is a lab test to check for shigella in the stool. In general your doctor may prescribe water and electrolyte replacement to prevent dehydration. Antibiotics are used as treatment but, unfortunately, some shigella have become antibiotic-resistant. Anti-diarrheal treatments are likely to make the illness worse and should be avoided. Contact your doctor about appropriate treatment if you think you may have symptoms of shigella.

How do I prevent the spread of Shigella?

-Children with diarrhea due to shigella should not return to the child care or school setting until diarrhea and other symptoms are no longer present or they have been treated and cleared by their medical provider to return.

-Wash hands thoroughly with soap and running water after using the toilet, changing diapers, and before preparing or eating food. Thorough hand washing is the best way to prevent spread of infectious diseases found in the intestinal tract. Help children to wash hands as well. Keep up good hand washing even after symptoms have stopped as you could still have the bacteria in your body.

-Clean and disinfect contaminated areas (toilets, diapering areas, faucets) daily or when soiled. Sanitize toys as needed and at least daily.

-Your doctor should report your illness to local health department.

Health Alert: Shigella

Date: _____

Dear Parent or Guardian

An individual at _____ has been diagnosed or is undergoing evaluation for an illness due to shigellosis, an infectious disease caused by bacteria that can live and grow in the digestive tract of humans. Shigella is a germ that is from a family of bacteria that can cause diarrhea in humans.

Watch for these symptoms:

Diarrhea, sometimes bloody; fever; nausea, sometimes vomiting; abdominal cramps, headache. Symptoms usually appear within 1-2 days after someone is exposed to the bacteria. Symptoms can last 12-96 hours (usually about 5-7 days) up to a week.

How it is spread:

-Shigella leaves the body through the stool of an infected person and enters another person when contaminated hands, food, or objects are placed in the mouth, or by drinking feces-contaminated water. Very little of the organism is needed to become infected.

-Spread may also occur whether or not a person feels sick.

For Example, it is easy for diapered children to pass intestinal infections to others, but anyone who does not wash his or her hands after using the toilet or changing diapers can spread disease.

Diagnosis and Treatment:

There is a lab test to check for shigella in the stool. In general your doctor may prescribe water and electrolyte replacement to prevent dehydration. Antibiotics are used as treatment but, unfortunately, some shigella have become antibiotic-resistant. Anti-diarrheal treatments are likely to make the illness worse and should be avoided. Contact your doctor about appropriate treatment if you think you may have symptoms of shigella.

Prevention and Controlling the Spread:

-Children with diarrhea due to shigella should not return to the child care or school setting until diarrhea and other symptoms are no longer present or they have been treated and cleared by their medical provider to return.

-Wash hands thoroughly with soap and running water after using the toilet, changing diapers, and before preparing or eating food. Thorough hand washing is the best way to prevent spread of infectious diseases found in the intestinal tract. Help children to wash hands as well. Keep up good hand washing even after symptoms have stopped as you could still have the bacteria in your body.

-Clean and disinfect contaminated areas (toilets, diapering areas, faucets) daily or when soiled. Sanitize toys as needed and at least daily.

-Your doctor should report your illness to local health department.