



3/16/2018

Dear Childcare Provider:

This letter is being sent to make you aware of an increase in the incidence of *Shigella* disease in the Midlands region and provide information about this disease and the prevention of its spread.

What is *Shigella*?

- Most people with *Shigella* infection have diarrhea with watery or loose stools. Symptoms of high fever, stomach cramps or tenderness may occur. Severe complications in the intestines and other body systems may also occur.

Shigella is very contagious; just a small number of germs can make someone sick. People could get sick by:

- Getting *Shigella* germs on their hands and then touching their food or mouth. This may happen after:
 - Touching surfaces contaminated with germs from stool from a sick person, such as toys, bathroom fixtures, changing tables or diaper pails.
 - Changing the diaper of a sick child or caring for a sick person.
- Eating food that was prepared by someone who is sick with shigellosis.

Shigella bacteria may be present in the diarrheal stools of infected persons while they are sick and for 1 to 4 weeks afterwards.

Ways to Prevent *Shigella* Infections

- Dispose of soiled diapers properly.
- Disinfect diaper-changing areas after using them.
- Supervise handwashing of toddlers and small children after they use the toilet.
- Persons who are will with diarrhea should not prepare food for others.
- Avoid swallowing water from ponds, lakes, or untreated pools.

Cleaning Recommendations

- It is important to thoroughly clean and disinfect surfaces that might be contaminated.
- Clean hard surfaces that are commonly touched in your facility with a bleach solution. Use 1/2 cup bleach in 1-gallon of water to wipe down hard surfaces (doorknobs, sink knobs and faucets, toilet seats and handles, changing tables, etc.). Wear gloves for protection when handling chemicals.
- Bleach solution must be prepared fresh daily and have 5 minutes (disinfecting) surface contact time.

Exclusion Rules

Children or staff in out-of-home childcare or students in Kindergarten:

- Exclude until diarrheal symptoms are resolved for at least 24 hours, and at least 1 stool culture or culture independent diagnostic test is negative for *Shigella*.
- If antibiotics were prescribed, stool cultures must be collected 48 or more hours after the antibiotics are completed.

Students in Grades 1-12:

- Exclude until diarrhea has stopped for at least 24 hours, provided that the student has good hand hygiene and ability to self-toilet.
- A student with questionable or poor hand hygiene may be required to have at least 1 *Shigella*-negative stool culture and to be diarrhea-free for at least 24 hours prior to returning. If antibiotics were prescribed, stool cultures must be collected 48 or more hours after the antibiotics are completed.

A complete copy of the exclusion list can be obtained at <http://www.scdhec.gov/Health/ChildTeenHealth/SchoolExclusion/>.

Additional information regarding shigellosis is available at <http://www.cdc.gov/shigella/>.

If you have any questions, please contact DHEC at 803-898-0861.

Sincerely,



Linda J. Bell, M.D., Director
Bureau of Communicable Disease Prevention and Control
State Epidemiologist

Fact Sheet Attached: "Does your child have diarrhea?"