

November 27, 2019

Health Advisory: Recommendations on preventing shigellosis

Texas Department of State Health Services, Public Health Region 9/10 has recently seen an increase in shigellosis cases in the Fort Stockton area. DSHS is currently investigating all reports of suspected shigellosis cases.

Shigellosis is an illness caused by *Shigella* bacteria that can spread through hand-to-mouth contact with stool from a sick person or animal, eating contaminated foods, or drinking contaminated water. Symptoms usually last 5 to 7 days, but some people may experience symptoms anywhere from a few days to a month or more. Person-to-person transmission is common in households.

Symptoms can include:

- diarrhea (which may be bloody)
- fever
- nausea
- vomiting
- stomach cramps

Treatment & Prevention:

Anyone who develops any of these symptoms should visit their health care provider and get tested for shigellosis via a stool specimen.

You can reduce your chance of getting sick from *Shigella* by taking these steps:

- Carefully washing your hands with soap and water during key times:
 - Before serving/preparing food and eating
 - After changing a diaper or touching anything soiled with stool
 - After using the restroom
 - After cleaning the living areas of pets or livestock
- Avoid swallowing water from ponds, lakes, or untreated swimming pools
- Avoid thawing foods on counters or in sinks and refrigerate leftovers right away

Exclusion recommendations:

Anyone who is sick should stay home from school, daycare or work until they are diarrhea free for 24 hours without the use of diarrhea suppressing medications and fever free for 24 hours without the use of fever suppressing medications.

Additional information and resources on *Shigella* can be found at the following webpages:
Texas Department of State Health Services - <https://dshs.texas.gov/idcu/disease/shigellosis/>
Centers for Disease Control & Prevention (CDC) - <https://www.cdc.gov/shigella/index.html>

For additional information, please contact the Texas Department of State Health Services, Public Health Region 9/10, 24/7 Reporting Line at 1-888-847-6891