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Increase in Shigellosis Cases in Pee Dee and Lowcountry Regions

Summary

There has been an increase in shigellosis cases recently reported to DHEC in the Pee Dee and Lowcountry Regions compared to past years.

DHEC is advising clinicians to consider the diagnosis of shigellosis in patients with clinically compatible illnesses, to perform confirmatory diagnostic testing when possible and to promptly report cases to DHEC.

Guidance for clinicians

Symptoms

The time between infection and onset of symptoms is usually about 1-2 days. Symptoms of shigellosis include diarrhea (sometimes bloody), fever, abdominal pain and tenesmus, or painful straining at stool.

Transmission and Risk Factors

Shigella germs are present in the stools of infected persons while they have diarrhea and for up to a week or two after the diarrhea has gone away. *Shigella* is very contagious; exposure to even a tiny amount of contaminated fecal matter—too small to see-- can cause infection. Transmission of *Shigella* occurs when people put something in their mouths or swallow something that has come into contact with stool of a person infected with *Shigella*.

This can happen when:

- Contaminated hands touch your food or mouth. Hands can become contaminated through a variety of activities, such as touching surfaces (e.g., toys, bathroom fixtures, changing tables, diaper pails) that have been contaminated by stool from an infected person. Hands can also become contaminated with *Shigella* while changing the diaper of an infected child or caring for an infected person.
- Eating food contaminated with *Shigella*. Food may become contaminated if food handlers have shigellosis. Produce can become contaminated if growing fields contain human sewage. Flies can breed in infected feces and then contaminate food when they land on it.
- Swallowing recreational (for example lake or river water while swimming) or drinking water that was contaminated by infected fecal matter.
- Exposure to feces through sexual contact.

Testing

Testing for *Shigella* is not routinely done for diarrheal illnesses by laboratories. If clinically suspicious, health care providers should request testing for enteric cultures or specifically *Shigella*.

Treatment

Diarrhea caused by *Shigella* usually resolves without antibiotic treatment in 5 to 7 days. People with mild shigellosis may need only fluids and rest. Bismuth subsalicylate (e.g., Pepto-Bismol®) may be helpful, but medications that cause the gut to slow down, such as loperamide (e.g., Imodium®) or diphenoxylate with atropine (e.g., Lomotil®), should be avoided. Antibiotics are useful for severe cases of shigellosis because they can reduce the duration of symptoms.

Shigella is often resistant to antibiotics. Resistance to traditional first-line antibiotics like ampicillin and trimethoprim-sulfamethoxazole is common among *Shigella* globally, and resistance to some other important antibiotics is increasing. While travelers to the developing world are at particular risk of acquiring antibiotic-resistant shigellosis, outbreaks of shigellosis resistant to ciprofloxacin or azithromycin—the two antibiotics most commonly used to treat shigellosis—have been reported recently within the United States and other industrialized countries. Susceptibility tests can be performed to learn whether a specific strain of *Shigella* is resistant to a given antibiotic.

Reporting Cases

Shigellosis is reportable within 72 hours of identification of a case. Call your local health department with questions, or to report a shigellosis case. Cases may also be reported to DHEC via an electronic report or by mailing an 1129 Disease Reporting Form in an envelope marked confidential to the regional public health office in the county where the patient resides.

DHEC contact information for reportable diseases and reporting requirements

Reporting of shigellosis is consistent with South Carolina Law requiring the reporting of diseases and conditions to your state or local public health department. (State Law # 44-29-10 and Regulation # 61-20) as per the DHEC 2016 List of Reportable Conditions available at:

<http://www.scdhec.gov/Library/CR-009025.pdf>

Federal HIPAA legislation allows disclosure of protected health information, without consent of the individual, to public health authorities to collect and receive such information for the purpose of preventing or controlling disease. (HIPAA 45 CFR §164.512).

Regional Public Health Offices – 2016

Mail or call reports to the Epidemiology Office in each Public Health Region

MAIL TO:

Lowcountry	Midlands	Pee Dee	Upstate
4050 Bridge View Drive, Suite 600 N. Charleston, SC 29405 Fax: (843) 953-0051	2000 Hampton Street Columbia, SC 29204 Fax: (803) 576-2993	145 E. Cheves Street Florence, SC 29506 Fax: (843) 661-4859	200 University Ridge Greenville, SC 29602 Fax: (864) 282-4373

CALL TO:

Lowcountry	Midlands	Pee Dee	Upstate
Berkeley, Charleston, Dorchester Phone: (843) 953-0043 Nights/Weekends: (843) 441-1091 Beaufort, Colleton, Hampton, Jasper Phone: (843) 322-2453 Nights/Weekends: (843) 441-1091 Allendale, Bamberg, Calhoun, Orangeburg Phone: (803) 268-5833 Nights/Weekends: (843) 441-1091	Kershaw, Lexington, Newberry, Richland Phone: (803) 576-2749 Nights/Weekends: (888) 801-1046 Chester, Fairfield, Lancaster, York Phone: (803) 286-9948 Nights/Weekends: (888) 801-1046 Aiken, Barnwell, Edgefield, Saluda Phone: (803) 642-1618 Nights/Weekends: (888) 801-1046	Chesterfield, Darlington, Dillon, Florence, Marlboro, Marion Phone: (843) 661-4830 Nights/Weekends: (843) 915-8845 Clarendon, Lee, Sumter Phone: (803) 773-5511 Nights/Weekends: (843) 915-8845 Georgetown, Horry, Williamsburg Phone: (843) 915-8804 Nights/Weekends: (843) 915-8845	Anderson, Oconee Phone: (864) 260-5801 Nights/Weekends: (866) 298-4442 Abbeville, Greenwood, Laurens, McCormick Phone: (864) 227-5947 Nights/Weekends: (866) 298-4442 Cherokee, Greenville, Pickens, Spartanburg, Union Phone: (864) 372-3133 Nights/Weekends: (866) 298-4442

For information on reportable conditions, see
<http://www.scdhec.gov/Health/FHPF/ReportDiseasesAdverseEvents/ReportableConditionsInSC/>

DHEC Bureau of Disease Control
Division of Acute Disease Epidemiology
 2100 Bull St • Columbia, SC 29201
 Phone: (803) 898-0861 • Fax: (803) 898-0897
 Nights / Weekends: 1-888-847-0902

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- Health Advisory** Provides important information for a specific incident or situation; may not require immediate action.
- Health Update** Provides updated information regarding an incident or situation; unlikely to require immediate action.
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