



Gila County  
Health & Emergency Management

Prevent. Promote. Protect.

5515 South Apache Ave., Suite 400, Globe, AZ 85501

PHONE: (928) 402-8811

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## Shigellosis Fact Sheet

### Background

Shigellosis is an illness caused by a group of bacteria called *Shigella*. People infected with *Shigella* develop symptoms of diarrhea (often bloody), fever, nausea and stomach cramps. Shigellosis can be severe in young children, the elderly, and those with weakened immune systems.



### Symptoms

Common symptoms include diarrhea (which is often bloody), fever, nausea, vomiting and abdominal cramps. Symptoms usually occur a few days after exposure and last 5 to 7 days. Some people with shigellosis may not have any symptoms, but can still pass *Shigella* to others.

### Transmission

*Shigella* bacteria are found in the intestinal tract of infected people and can be shed in their feces for up to a week after their symptoms resolve. Infected persons can spread the bacteria if they do not wash their hands well enough after using the bathroom. The most common ways to become infected with *Shigella* are:

- Contact with an infected person
- Consuming foods or liquids contaminated by an infected person
- Swallowing recreational water (such as lakes, pools, and play fountains) contaminated with *Shigella*

### Treatment

If you have shigellosis, drink plenty of fluids to avoid dehydration. Most persons with shigellosis will recover without any specific treatment. In more severe cases, antibiotics may be given and can shorten the duration and severity of illness.

### Prevention

- Wash your hands frequently with soap and water, especially after going to the bathroom, after changing diapers, and before preparing foods or beverages
- Dispose of soiled diapers properly and disinfect diaper changing areas after use
- Keep children with diarrhea out of child care settings
- Supervise hand washing of toddlers and small children after they use the toilet
- Persons with diarrheal illness should not prepare food for others
- Persons with diarrheal illness should not take part in recreational water activities
- Avoid drinking recreational water



### For more information

If you need more information, please contact your primary care physician or Gila County Division of Health & Emergency Management at (928) 402-8811.