



Shigella – An Enteric STD

What is Shigella?

Shigella are bacteria that cause a stomach infection. They are only found in human stool or bowel movements.

What is an enteric STD?

An STD is a sexually transmitted disease. An enteric STD is a disease that is spread by mouth to anus (oral-anal) contact, usually by having anal sex.

Who can get it?

Anyone who comes into contact with infected stool can get Shigella. Men having sex with men are at higher risk due to high rates of infection in the gay community.

What are the symptoms of Shigella?

When a person is sick with Shigella, they can have diarrhea, sometimes with blood and/or mucous, fever, stomach cramps, nausea (feeling sick to your stomach) and vomiting.

Symptoms usually happen one to three days after exposure. A person with Shigella may experience mild, severe or no symptoms. If you have serious symptoms, you should see a doctor. In most cases, it takes four to seven days to get better and sometimes longer.

How is Shigella spread?

Shigella is very infectious and spreads easily. The bacteria are in the stool of an infected person, and infection occurs when tiny bits of infected stool get in someone else's mouth. Being exposed to infected stool can occur through sexual contact:

- Through oral-anal contact, sometimes called rimming.
- By getting stool onto your fingers and then touching your mouth.
- By putting objects that have tiny bits of stool on them such as sex toys into your mouth.

How can you prevent Shigella?

When having sex:

- Do not have unprotected direct oral-anal contact.
- Use a dam, plastic wrap or cut open a condom when having oral-anal contact.

- Use latex gloves when hands have contact with the anal area.
- When handling the dam or removing the glove, do not touch the area that has been in contact with the anus.
- Right after sex, discard used condoms and dams.
- Thoroughly wash your hands, other body parts, such as the penis, and objects used like sex toys that may have touched stool. Use running water and soap.
- When washing vigorously rub hands together including the backs of your hands and wrists.
- Clean under your nails and keep them short.
- Dry hands with a fresh paper towel or clean towel.

If you have Shigella, how can you prevent giving it to others?

- Do not have unprotected oral-anal sex for at least seven days after your symptoms have stopped.
- Wash your hands well and regularly with soap and warm water. This is important for all age groups, especially after having a bowel movement, and before preparing foods or drinks. People infected with Shigella should avoid preparing food and drinks for others.
- Persons who handle food, or who care for children, someone who is sick, the elderly, or other dependents, cannot go to work until they have shown that they have cleared the infection. Persons are clear of infection when follow up stool specimens, submitted after treatment is complete, are negative.

When should you see a doctor?

Contact a doctor if you experience fever, stomach pains or cramps, or diarrhea or loose stools, especially if blood is present.

In some persons, the diarrhea can be very bad and they need to go to hospital. If you have diarrhea, drink lots of fluids to avoid dehydration.

What is the treatment for Shigella?

Persons with Shigella infections can be treated with antibiotics to speed recovery and to help prevent others from getting it.

Ways to reduce your risk of getting a sexually transmitted disease

- Have sex with only one partner who has been tested for sexually transmitted diseases (STDs), who has been treated if necessary and who is having sex only with you. The more partners you have, the higher your risk of getting an STD.
- Use a female or male condom every time you have sex. Condoms offer protection against STDs, but they must be used properly.
- Have regular check-ups for STDs.
- Decide not to have sex.

Important facts about condoms

- A condom acts like a barrier that helps prevent the exchange of body fluids, the transmission of sexually transmitted infections, and pregnancy.
- A new condom should be used each time you have sexual intercourse (anal, vaginal, or oral sex).
- Check the expiry date on the condom package.
- Use only water-based lubricants with the male latex condom. Oil-based lubricants, such as petroleum jelly, lotion or baby oil, can weaken and destroy latex.
- Female condoms are made of polyurethane. This material can be used with any type of lubricant, water-based or oil-based.
- Some lubricants contain chemicals called spermicides to help protect against unwanted pregnancy. If they irritate your genitals, don't use them.
- Do not use a male condom together with a female condom as the friction created may cause tearing of either product.
- If a condom breaks during sex remove it immediately and apply a new condom.
- Remember! Condoms do not offer 100 per cent protection from STDs and unwanted pregnancy. It will not consistently prevent transmission of STDs passed through skin-to-skin contact – for example, syphilis, human papilloma virus (warts) and herpes. However, if used properly, they are very effective and can reduce the risk of transmission of these STDs.

Putting on a male condom

- Take the condom carefully out of the packet.
- Place the condom on the tip of the penis when it is hard and erect, but before it touches the partner's body. Make sure that the rolled-up condom rim faces outward.
- With the other hand, pinch the tip of the condom to remove any trapped air, and unroll the condom to the base of the erect penis.

- After intercourse and before the penis becomes soft, withdraw the penis carefully, holding the rim of the condom against the penis, so that semen does not spill out.
- Slide the condom gently off the penis, and knot the open end.
- After using the condom, throw it in the garbage.

Putting on a female condom

- A condom can be inserted up to eight hours before sexual intercourse.
- Open the package carefully. Hold the small ring at the closed end of the condom between the thumb and middle finger.
- Find a comfortable position, either lying down, sitting with your knees apart or standing with one foot raised on a stool, squeeze the small ring and insert it into the vagina as far as you can.
- Put a finger inside the condom and push the small ring inside as far as possible. It is also possible to insert the condom by putting it onto the erect penis before intercourse.
- Make sure that the part of the condom with the outer ring is outside the body. The outer ring will lie flat against the body when the penis is inside the condom.
- When the penis enters the vagina, make sure that the penis is inside the condom.
- Immediately after sexual intercourse, remove the condom by gently twisting the outer ring and pulling the condom out, making sure that no semen is spilt and throw it in the garbage.



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