



PUBLIC HEALTH ADVISORY:

## Increase in *Shigella* Cases in Franklin County and the Greater Columbus Area

August 13, 2012

From Columbus Public Health and Franklin County Public Health

### What you need to know

Columbus and Franklin County Public Health are monitoring a significant increase in cases of *Shigella* throughout Franklin County and the Greater Columbus area.

*Shigella* causes diarrhea illness and is spread from one person to the next through the stool (poop) of infected people. It most often spreads when someone does not wash his/her hands well after using the restroom, changing a diaper, or helping a child with toileting. *Shigella* can be spread while an individual is sick and for up to 4 weeks after symptoms stop or sometimes longer.

It is particularly likely to occur among toddlers who are not fully toilet-trained. Family members, day care providers and playmates of such children are at high risk of becoming sick and infecting others.

The spread of *Shigella* can be stopped by frequent and careful hand washing with soap. Frequent and careful hand washing is important among all age groups. Hand washing among children should be frequent and supervised by an adult in day care centers.

If a child in diapers has diarrhea everyone who changes the child's diapers should be sure the diapers are disposed of properly in a closed-lid garbage can, and should wash his/her hands and the child's hands carefully with soap and warm water immediately after changing the diapers. After use, the diaper changing area should be disinfected.

### What to watch for

Symptoms usually begin 1 to 4 days after swallowing the bacteria and include:

- Diarrhea
- Fever
- Stomach Cramps
- Nausea or Vomiting
- Some people may have no symptoms, but can still spread the bacteria.
- Symptoms usually last 5-7 days. However, it may take a few months to feel completely normal.

### Who is at risk

Children in childcare centers and those individuals with chronic diseases or weakened immune systems or those individuals who change diapers or assist children with toileting.

- A few people may develop complications such as dehydration, or seizures.

## What you can do

1. Wash hands with soap carefully and frequently, especially after going to the bathroom, after changing diapers, and before preparing foods or beverages.
2. Supervise hand washing of toddlers and small children after they use the toilet.
3. Dispose of soiled diapers properly.
4. Disinfect diaper changing areas after using them.
5. Keep children with diarrhea out of child care settings.
6. Do not prepare food for others while ill with diarrhea.
7. If you see an increase in diarrheal incidence among children and/or staff encourage them to see their medical provider for further testing or diagnosis.

## To learn more

[Columbus Public Health – Shigella Information](#)

Infectious Disease Reporting System web site: <http://idrsinfo.com>

What is this? [Learn more about this emergency notification system.](#)



Columbus Public Health line:  
614-645-1474 option #2

Franklin County Public Health:  
614-525-3160