

Shigella outbreaks are not unusual. This bacteria is very easily spread from one person to another through the fecal-oral route. Making handwashing a habit is an important way to prevent the spread of illness. Wash your hands with soap and water throughout the day, and especially after using the bathroom, after changing a diaper and before preparing food. If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol. This type of hand sanitizer will kill *Shigella* bacteria, but, does not work well all types of germs. Hand sanitizers do not work well if hands are greasy or dirty. Do wash your hands as soon as possible after using a hand sanitizer. Other products, like baby wipes, do not remove germs completely and are not recommended for cleaning hands.

If you or someone in your family has symptoms of *Shigella* infection, such as diarrhea, a stomach ache and sometimes fever, visit your healthcare provider and ask about a test for *Shigella*. In most cases, people who are sick with *Shigella* infections will get better on their own in 5 to 7 days. For some people, like those who are already ill with other diseases, it may take longer to get better or they may need antibiotics. Please see your primary healthcare provider if you are not feeling better or your symptoms become worse.

Make handwashing a habit is the best way to protect yourself and your family from illness. For more information about *Shigella* infection, please visit our website at www.gchd.us.

Genesee County Health Department, Your Health. Our Work.

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