

This is an official
DHEC Health Advisory

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Increase in Shigellosis Cases in the Midlands Region

Summary

An increase in the number of shigellosis cases has recently been identified in the Midlands Region. This increase has primarily been identified in Lexington, Aiken and Richland Counties.

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.

Transmission and Risk Factors

Shigella bacteria are present in the stools of infected persons while they have diarrhea and for up to a week or two after the diarrhea has stopped. *Shigella* is very contagious; exposure to even a tiny amount of contaminated fecal matter can cause infection. Transmission of *Shigella* occurs via the fecal-oral route.

This can happen when:

- Contaminated hands touch someone's 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 occurs through sexual contact.

Testing

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

Treatment

Diarrhea caused by *Shigella* usually resolves without antibiotic treatment in 5 to 7 days. People with mild shigellosis might need only fluids and rest. Bismuth subsalicylate (e.g., Pepto-Bismol®) might 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, however, *Shigella* bacteria are 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 regional public health office with questions, or to report a shigellosis case. Cases can 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. Phone numbers and mailing addresses for regional public health offices are listed below.

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 2018 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 – 2018

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

MAIL TO:

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

<p><u>Lowcountry</u> Berkeley, Charleston, Dorchester Phone: (843) 953-0043 Nights/Weekends: (843) 441-1091</p> <p>Beaufort, Colleton, Hampton, Jasper Phone: (843) 549-1516 ext. 218 Nights/Weekends: (843) 441-1091</p> <p>Allendale, Bamberg, Calhoun, Orangeburg Phone: (803) 268-5833 Nights/Weekends: (843) 441-1091</p>	<p><u>Midlands</u> Kershaw, Lexington, Newberry, Richland Phone: (803) 576-2749 Nights/Weekends: (888) 801-1046</p> <p>Chester, Fairfield, Lancaster, York Phone: (803) 286-9948 Nights/Weekends: (888) 801-1046</p> <p>Aiken, Barnwell, Edgefield, Saluda Phone: (803) 642-1618 Nights/Weekends: (888) 801-1046</p>	<p><u>Pee Dee</u> Chesterfield, Darlington, Dillon, Florence, Marlboro, Marion Phone: (843) 661-4830 Nights/Weekends: (843) 915-8845</p> <p>Clarendon, Lee, Sumter Phone: (803) 773-5511 Nights/Weekends: (843) 915-8845</p> <p>Georgetown, Horry, Williamsburg Phone: (843) 915-8804 Nights/Weekends: (843) 915-8845</p>	<p><u>Upstate</u> Anderson, Oconee Phone: (864) 260-5581 Nights/Weekends: (866) 298-4442</p> <p>Abbeville, Greenwood, McCormick Phone: (864) 260-5581 Nights/Weekends: (866) 298-4442</p> <p>Cherokee, Greenville, Laurens, Pickens, Spartanburg, Union Phone: (864) 372-3133 Nights/Weekends: (866) 298-4442</p>
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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

Categories of Health Alert messages:

Health Alert	Conveys the highest level of importance; warrants immediate action or attention.
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.
Info Service	Provides general information that is not necessarily considered to be of an emergent nature.