



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

October 20, 2015

FOR MEDIA INQUIRIES CONTACT:

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PUBLIC HEALTH ADVISORY

The City of Lubbock Health Department continues to see an increase in shigellosis cases in Lubbock area schools and daycares. Surveillance staff have investigated 71 confirmed cases of shigellosis since September 1. The city typically sees a few cases a month.

Shigella is the bacterium that causes shigellosis, a diarrheal illness that lasts from 4-7 days. Fever, vomiting and stomach cramps may also be present. Once a person is exposed, symptoms usually develop within 1-3 days, with a range of up to 7 days after exposure. Some people with Shigellosis will have no symptoms at all but are still able to spread the infection to others.

Shigella is spread person-to-person through the unwashed hands of an infected person. This can happen by direct contact, or by food or drink handled by the infected person. Although shigellosis is easily spread, it can also be easily prevented. The key is **GOOD HANDWASHING**—before and after eating or handling food, after using the toilet, after infant diaper changes and frequently during the day. Restrooms and diaper changing surfaces should be sanitized with bleach or antibacterial cleaner frequently.

Steps in good hand washing:

- **Wet** your hands with clean, running water (warm or cold), and apply soap.
- **Lather** your hands by rubbing them together with the soap. Be sure to lather the backs of your hands, between your fingers, and under your nails.
- **Scrub** your hands for at least 20 seconds. Need a timer? Hum the "Happy Birthday" song from beginning to end twice.
- **Rinse** your hands well under clean, running water.
- **Dry** your hands using a clean towel or air dry them.

Washing hands with soap and water is recommended. If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol. Alcohol-based hand sanitizers can quickly reduce the number of germs on hands in some situations, but sanitizers do **not** eliminate all types of germs.

Persons who have symptoms (diarrhea, abdominal cramping, fever, nausea, and vomiting) should contact a physician immediately. Treatment with antibiotics will shorten the days of illness and also shorten the length of time an infected person sheds the bacteria and can infect others.

Persons with diarrheal illness, including shigellosis, should not attend work, school or daycare until treated and released by their physician or free from fever and diarrhea for 24 hours.

You can find further information about shigellosis and other gastrointestinal illnesses at: www.cdc.gov.

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