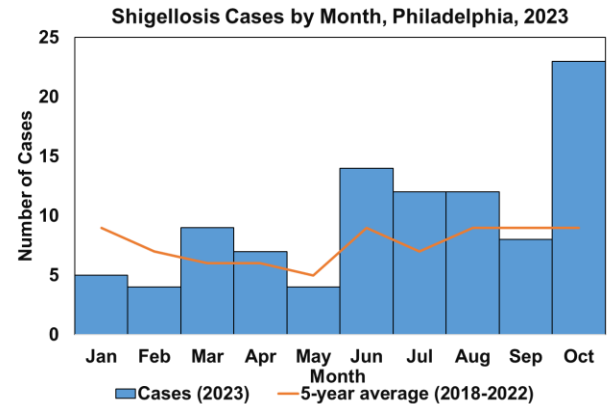


Health Advisory

Increase in Shigella Cases in Philadelphia November 8, 2023

SUMMARY POINTS

- An increase in shigella cases has been observed in Philadelphia over the last month.
- Cases have been reported among people experiencing homelessness and opioid use disorder.
- Shigellosis is a reportable condition in Philadelphia.
- Providers who use culture-independent diagnostic test (CIDT) instead of culture for diagnosis should request reflex culture when CIDT is positive.



Shigellosis is an acute enteric infection that can cause bacterial diarrhea. Diarrhea may be bloody and associated with fever, abdominal pain, and tenesmus. Shigellosis is often self-limited, but sometimes requires treatment with antibiotics. In March of this year the CDC released a [health advisory](#) addressing the increase in extensively drug-resistant shigellosis in the United States.

Shigella is a bacteria transmitted by the fecal-oral route via person-to-person contact, including sexual contact, or through contaminated food and water. To prevent shigella, providers should encourage individuals to wash hands thoroughly with soap and warm water after using the bathroom and before handling food. Persons who do not have access to soap and water should use hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol. Advise persons ill with shigella to wash hands often, refrain from preparing food for others, and to not have sex for two weeks after diarrheal illness or use condoms and other barriers to reduce spread to others.

Cases in Philadelphia have increased in the last month. There have been 21 cases identified among adults and 4 cases identified among children since October 1, 2023. Investigations are ongoing, however preliminary investigations suggest that some individuals testing positive are experiencing homelessness or opioid use disorder. Among the cases, different species and serovars have been identified indicating that more than one cluster is possibly occurring. Nationwide, cases are being reported frequently among people experiencing homelessness, as well as gay, bisexual, and other men who have sex with men.

Shigellosis is a reportable disease in Philadelphia. Labs and clinicians should report all cases of shigellosis with antibiotic susceptibility test results to the Philadelphia Department of Public Health's Division of Disease Control through electronic laboratory reporting, faxing a report to 215-238-6947, or calling 215-685-6748. All positive isolates or specimens are required to be submitted to the Pennsylvania Department of Health Bureau of Laboratories within five workdays of the positive test result.

Providers using culture-independent diagnostic test (CIDT) instead of culture for diagnosis of enteric infections should request that the clinical laboratory perform reflex culture when CIDT is positive for Shigella species. If a culture is positive for Shigella, order antimicrobial susceptibility testing to inform antimicrobial selection. In addition, providers should consider HIV testing in individuals requiring hospitalization due to shigellosis.

Resources

- CDC Shigellosis Information for Healthcare Providers: <https://www.cdc.gov/shigella/audience-medical-professionals.html>
- CDC Shigellosis Among People Experiencing Homelessness: https://www.cdc.gov/shigella/specific_groups/people-experiencing-homelessness.html