

Shigella: Information for Outreach Workers

Help prevent the spread of shigella among the people you serve.

- Let them know that people are getting sick with a germ called Shigella that causes diarrhea.
- Promote proper hand hygiene widely:
 - Wash hands with soap and warm water for 20 seconds or use hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol if soap and water are not available.
 - Distribute personal hand sanitizers and other hygiene materials to people if able.
- Encourage people to use clean equipment and water if injecting drugs and to exchange used needles for clean ones.
- Encourage people to practice safe sex and use condoms, gloves, or other barriers with anal contact.
- Ensure that restrooms are clean and well-maintained. Let people know about public restroom locations, such as the Philly Phlush locations or the Porta Potties at Prevention Point's Love Lot.
- Clean and disinfect surfaces. Cleaning guidance is available here: bit.ly/CleaningGuidance.
- Share information about shigella and how to prevent it: bit.ly/ShigellaInfo

On November 8, 2023, the Philadelphia Department of Public Health (PDPH) issued a [Health Advisory](#) regarding an increase in shigella cases in Philadelphia since October 2023. While investigations are ongoing, they currently suggest that some people testing positive are experiencing homelessness or opioid use disorder.

Shigella bacteria can spread easily, especially in environments where there is crowding or limited access to clean water and toilets. Because of this, people experiencing homelessness are at high risk for infection when shigellosis is spreading in the community. This includes people who are unsheltered and people who are living in group settings.

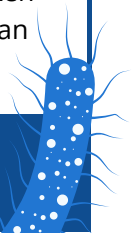
Shigella can be common among people experiencing homelessness.

People experiencing homelessness are more likely to get a Shigella infection for various reasons. The following also increase the risk for disease transmission:

- Exposure to contaminated food and water.
- Overcrowding in shelters.
- Limited access to hygiene and sanitation.

People may have pre-existing conditions that can weaken their immune system, such as HIV or hepatitis, which can put them at higher risk of severe disease.

Shigella spreads VERY EASILY from one person to another.



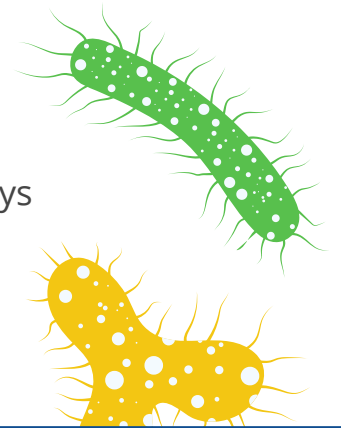
People who have diarrhea should take precautions to stop the spread.

- Wash your hands **any chance** you get and especially after using the bathroom, before eating, and before and after using drugs.
- **Do not** prepare food for others.
- **Do not** have sex for two weeks after illness. Use condoms and other barriers to reduce spread to partners.
- Always **use clean equipment and water** if using drugs. Do not share equipment, and exchange used needles for clean ones.



People should seek medical attention if they have:

- Fever
- Bloody diarrhea
- Diarrhea lasting 3 or more days
- Severe stomach cramping
- Dehydration



- During business hours, call 215-685-6748.
- After-hours, call 215-686-4514. Ask for DDC on-call staff.