

DUBUQUE COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT

News Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Shigella Reported in Dubuque County

The Dubuque County Health Department, the Dubuque County Board of Health, and the Iowa Department of Public Health (IDPH) are investigating an outbreak of Shigellosis cases. Shigellosis is a disease caused by the bacterium, *Shigella*, which causes watery and sometimes bloody diarrhea. Symptoms of Shigellosis usually begin one to three days after infection and include diarrhea, fever, nausea, vomiting, and abdominal cramps.

Shigella is spread:

- Person-to-Person. Any infected person can infect others by failing to properly wash their hands before handling food or coming into close contact with another person. Infections in households, pre-schools, child care facilities, and elderly and developmentally disabled living facilities are commonly spread in this manner.

Shigellosis is an extremely contagious disease. Because of this, measures should be taken to prevent its spread. These measures include:

- Thoroughly wash hands with soap and running warm water for no less than 15 seconds. This should be done after using the toilet, changing diapers, or before eating or preparing any food.
- Infants and children should have their hands washed as above after a diaper change, after using the toilet, or before eating.
- Infected people should stay away from school, child care, food preparation or work while they have diarrhea. Food handlers, health care workers, and those working in child care who have shigellosis should have two consecutive negative stool cultures before returning to work or child care. Children who have had shigellosis and are returning to child care should have one negative stool culture.

Contact the Dubuque County Infection Control Specialists at the VNA (563-556-6200) or IDPH 515-242-5935) for questions about clearing persons for work or child care.

Shigellosis typically goes away without treatment after four to seven days; however, if the infection is severe or the infected person has a poor immune system, antibiotic treatment may be needed. In some cases, the diarrhea associated with shigellosis can be dangerously dehydrating, especially in the very young and very old. In that event, see a doctor immediately. If you have symptoms of shigellosis, or have had contact with someone diagnosed with the infection, you should contact your health care provider.

For more information, visit <http://idph.iowa.gov/cade/disease-information/shigella>

Thank you!

Patrice Lambert, RN MSN

Executive Director of the Dubuque County Health Department