

## Remember

- If you are employed as a food handler, legally you are not allowed to handle food until you have been microbiologically cleared by a doctor or through your local Public Health Service. Healthcare workers, childcare workers and pre-schoolers must also be cleared before returning to work or pre-school.
- Strict hand hygiene is important. Clean hands thoroughly after contact with soiled articles, after going to the toilet and before handling food.
- Clean hands are hands that are washed with soap and water for 20 seconds and thoroughly dried on a clean dry cloth towel or disposable paper towel for a further 20 seconds.
- Avoid contact with infants, the elderly or those with long term illness until you are free of all symptoms for at least 24 hours.
- Cook food thoroughly - the bacteria dies when food is steaming hot.
- Always source shellfish from a reputable supplier.

For more information contact  
Auckland Regional Public Health Service,  
Ph (09)623 4600.

## Auckland Regional Public Health Service

Rātonga Hauora ā Iwi o Tamaki Makaurau



Working with the people of Auckland, Counties Manukau and Waitemata

## Auckland Regional Public Health Service

Rātonga Hauora ā Iwi o Tamaki Makaurau



Working with the people of Auckland, Counties Manukau and Waitemata

## Shigellosis

A disease carried by food



# Shigellosis

## What is it?

Shigellosis is an illness caused by bacteria that affects the small and large intestine. It is usually transmitted when people eat food or drink water contaminated by shigella bacteria. Illness usually begins 1 - 3 days after contact with the bacteria.

## What are the symptoms?

Symptoms usually include diarrhoea, sometimes with blood or mucus, stomach cramps and fever, lasting from 4 to 7 days. Nausea and vomiting often occur. The disease is more serious in infants, small children and the elderly.

## How is it treated?

Fluid replacement and rest is recommended, however, a doctor should always be consulted if symptoms are severe. A doctor may give further advice or give antibiotic treatment to reduce the symptoms.

## How is it spread?

People become infected when they swallow the bacteria. This can happen:

- ▶ From contact with the faeces of infected people, including children and babies.
- ▶ From eating food and drinking water contaminated with shigella.
- ▶ Flies can also transmit the germ onto food.

## How to prevent it?

- ▶ Be careful when cleaning up after ill people. Faeces should be cleaned up using first a detergent solution then a solution of household chlorine bleach.
- ▶ Clean hands thoroughly after contact with soiled articles, after going to the toilet and before handling food.
- ▶ Clean hands are hands that are washed with soap and water for 20 seconds and thoroughly dried on a clean dry cloth towel or disposable paper towel for a further 20 seconds.
- ▶ Do not handle food at home or at work until you are cleared of the infection.
- ▶ If you are employed as a food handler, legally you are not allowed to handle food until you are cleared. This can be done through your local Public Health Service or your doctor.
- ▶ Healthcare workers, childcare workers and pre-schoolers should also be cleared before returning to work or pre-school.
- ▶ Avoid contact with infants, the elderly or those with long term illness until you are symptom free for at least 24 hours.