



**Public Health**  
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**Champaign-Urbana Public Health District**

**HEALTH ALERT**

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## **CUPHD Alerts Public to County-Wide Outbreak of Shigellosis**

*Champaign-Urbana Public Health District Urges the Public to Wash  
Their Hands Often to Prevent the Spread of the Disease*

Champaign, IL – The Champaign-Urbana Public Health District (CUPHD) has determined that there is an outbreak of shigellosis in Champaign County. Since January of 2009, CUPHD has been alerted to 40 lab confirmed cases of shigellosis. CUPHD has requested that the medical community and emergency departments increase testing and treatment of shigellosis. CUPHD has also notified and sent informational letters to Champaign County daycares, educational facilities, pools, day camps, and restaurants.

Shigellosis is an infectious disease caused by a group of bacteria called *Shigella*. Most who are infected with *Shigella* develop diarrhea, fever, and stomach cramps starting a day or two after they are exposed to the bacteria. The diarrhea is often bloody. Shigellosis usually resolves in 5-7 days. Persons with shigellosis rarely require hospitalization. A severe infection with high fever may be associated with seizures in children less than two years old. Some persons who are infected may have no symptoms at all, but may still pass the *Shigella* bacteria to others.

Most *Shigella* infections are the result of bacterium spreading from the stools or soiled fingers of one person to the mouth of another. This happens when basic hygiene and hand washing habits are inadequate. It is particularly likely to occur among toddlers who are not fully toilet-trained. Family members and playmates of toddlers are at high risk of becoming infected.

The spread of *Shigella* can be stopped by frequent and careful hand washing with soap and warm water. Hand washing among children should be frequent and supervised by an

adult. In a household where a child is in diapers, everyone who changes the diapers should be sure that the soiled diapers are disposed of properly in a closed-lid garbage can. Those who change the diapers should wash his or her hands and the child's hands carefully with soap and warm water immediately after handling soiled diapers.

CUPHD encourages the public to utilize the following steps to prevent the spread of shigellosis:

- Wash hands with soap carefully and frequently, especially after going to the bathroom, after changing diapers, and before preparing foods and beverages.
- Dispose of soiled diapers properly.
- Disinfect diaper changing areas after using them.
- Keep children with diarrhea out of child care settings until they have been symptom free for at least 48 hours.
- Supervise hand washing of toddlers and small children after they have used the bathroom.
- Do not prepare foods and beverages for other when ill with diarrhea.
- Avoid swallowing water from ponds, lakes or untreated pools.

Proper hand washing should include the following steps:

- Wet your hands and apply soap.
- Rub hands together vigorously to lather and scrub all surfaces.
- Continue washing for 20 seconds (the time it takes to sing "Happy Birthday"-twice!).
- Rinse hands well under running water.
- Dry hands using a single use paper towel or air dryer.
- If possible, use the paper towel to turn off the faucet and open the bathroom door to avoid contaminating your clean hands.

For more information, please contact CUPHD, Division of Infectious Disease Prevention & Management, (217) 352-7961 or visit our website at [www.c-uphd.org](http://www.c-uphd.org).

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