



Public Health
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Champaign-Urbana Public Health District

HEALTH ALERT
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Contact: Rachella Thompson-Brown,
Communicable Disease Investigator,
(217) 531-5361 or Awais Vaid,
Epidemiologist (217) 531-5360

C-UPHD Alerts Public to Widespread cases of Shigellosis in Champaign County

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 (C-UPHD) is alerting community residents of widespread increase in shigellosis in Champaign County. Since January of 2015, C-UPHD has been alerted to 20 lab confirmed cases of shigellosis. C-UPHD has requested that the medical community and emergency departments increase testing and treatment of shigellosis. C-UPHD has 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. Some persons who are infected may have no symptoms at all, but may still pass the Shigella bacteria to others.

When someone develops diarrhea, they should be excluded promptly from work or school and if the diarrhea does not resolve quickly contact your physician to get tested. Testing is imperative to help prevent the spread in social situations such as school, day-camp, and swimming pools. Individuals must be symptom-free for 48 hours before they can return to social situations.

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. 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.

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 social 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 C-UPHD at (217) 352-7961 or visit our website at www.c-uphd.org.

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