How can I test for Shigella?

If you have symptoms of shigella infection, please consult with your GP or healthcare provider for further advice. A stool sample can be tested for the presence of Shigella bacteria.





What should I do If I think I might have Shigella?

You may contact or visit:

Your GP or local health centre



The GU Clinic on 2545 7491

























What is Shigella?

Shigella is a bacterium that causes a diarrhoeal disease (shigellosis).

How do Shigella bacteria spread?

Shigella can be transmitted through contact with the faeces (poo) of an infected person:

- By eating food contaminated by a person suffering from shigellosis
- By swallowing water contaminated by infected faecal matter
- During sex, if bacteria in the faecal matter gets in the mouth by licking contaminated skin, condoms or toys. Sexual activities such as oro-anal sex (rimming) and fingering the anus increase the risk of infection.

Shigella is highly infectious and only a tiny amount of bacteria is required to get infected.

What are the symptoms of Shigella infection and how long do they last?

Shigella does not always show any symptoms, but one would still be infectious to others without being aware. Symptoms are typically seen between 1 and 4 days after exposure and they generally last up to 7 days.

Signs and symptoms of shigella infection include:



Diarrhoea lasting more than 48 hours (often with blood and mucous in it)



Stomach cramps





Feeling the need to pass stools even when the bowels are empty (tenesmus)

My stool test result confirmed that I have a Shigella infection. What can I do to prevent from infecting others?

Shigella is highly infectious and can remain present in your stools for a couple of weeks after symptoms subside. It is therefore important that you:



Wash your hands frequently with soap and water especially after using the bathroom.

Do not share towels at

home, and clean all taps.

door handles, toilet

handles, levers and seats

with hot soapy water

frequently.



Do not prepare food for others if you are sick and until a week after symptoms stop. Afterwards make sure to always wash hands prior to preparing meals and after using toilet.





Avoid any sexual activity until a week after symptoms stop. Following which take measures to avoid faecal-oral exposure to others during sex.



Do not go to spas/jacuzzi/pools for at least a week after symptoms resolve.



Wait for 48 hours after the symptoms stop before going back to work. If you are a food handler, health care worker or work in childcare, you must obtain approval from Public Health before returning to work.



What can I do to prevent getting a shigella infection?

What is the treatment for Shigella infection?

Although symptoms can be unpleasant, in most cases they will subside within a week and may need only fluids and rest. However some individuals, especially if immunosuppressed, may develop a severe and prolonged disease which could

require hospitalisation. Antibiotic treatment is prescribed to those with severe



Wash your hands frequently especially after using the toilet before eating and after handling items/surfaces potentially contaminated with faecal matter (ex. nappies)



Avoid drinking/swallowing potentially contaminated water (e.g. drinking from streams or whilst swimming)



When travelling, make sure to consume safe food and water.



Take measure to reduce faecal-oral exposure during sex.

■ Wash your hands, genitals and anus with soap and water before and after sexual activity.



Use barriers the right way during sex. These include condoms during anal and vaginal sex; latex gloves for anal fingering or fisting and dental dams during oral and oral-anal sex.



Do not engage in sexual activities with people who have or recently had diarrhoea.







