



STATE OF HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH
P. O. BOX 3378
HONOLULU, HI 96801-3378

In reply, please refer to:
File:

November 26, 2018

MEDICAL ADVISORY: CLUSTERS OF *SHIGELLA SONNEI*

Dear Healthcare Provider:

The Hawaii Department of Health (HDOH) is investigating two potentially related clusters of *Shigella sonnei* infections in 47 persons with illness onsets between September 5, 2018 and November 14, 2018. The most commonly reported symptoms have been diarrhea with more than a quarter reporting bloody diarrhea, abdominal pain or cramps, and fever. Ill persons ranged in age from 2–90 years, median 45 years, with females and males equally represented. Eighteen persons have required hospitalization ranging from 1–10 days, median 3 days; all have recovered. No common source has been identified.

We request all providers please report to HDOH any cases of bloody diarrhea with onset from September 5, 2018. *Shigella* infection should be considered when evaluating patients with severe or bloody diarrhea. For suspect cases, please order a stool culture, specifically requesting enteric and especially *Shigella* bacteria testing, as some laboratories do not routinely test all stool cultures for *Shigella*. Please request any identified *Shigella* isolates to be sent to the State Laboratories Division for confirmation.

Shigella infection can present as watery or loose stools with minimal or no constitutional symptoms to more severe symptoms, including high fever, abdominal cramps, and mucoid stools with or without blood. *Shigella* are transmitted primarily via the fecal-oral route, although transmission can also occur via contact with a contaminated object, ingestion of contaminated food or water, or sexual contact. *Shigella* is very contagious. Ingestion of as few as 10 organisms, depending on the species, is sufficient for infection to occur.

Most clinical infections with *Shigella sonnei* are self-limited (48–72 hours), and mild episodes do not require antimicrobial therapy. Antimicrobial treatment is recommended for patients with severe disease or underlying immunosuppressive conditions. For confirmed cases, restrict from food handling and direct care occupations until 2 consecutive stool samples or rectal swabs collected greater than or equal to 24 hours apart, and not less than 48 hours after cessation of antimicrobial therapy, are negative for *Shigella*. For contacts, restrict from food handling and direct care occupations until stool is confirmed culture negative. Please remind patients with

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Shigella to:

- Carefully wash hands with soap and water often
- NOT prepare food if they are sick
- NOT share food with anyone
- NOT go swimming
- NOT have sex (vaginal, anal, and oral) for at least one week after diarrhea ceases
- Stay home from school or from healthcare, food service, or childcare jobs while sick and until safe to return (see above).

Any suspected cases of *Shigella* infection should be reported IMMEDIATELY to HDOH by phone:

Oahu (Disease Investigation Branch).....	(808) 586-4586
Maui District Health Office.....	(808) 984-8213
Kauai District Health Office.....	(808) 241-3563
Big Island District Health Office (Hilo).....	(808) 933-0912
Big Island District Health Office (Kona).....	(808) 322-4877
After hours on Oahu.....	(808) 566-5049
After hours on neighbor islands.....	1(800) 360-2575 (toll free)

Thank you for your assistance in protecting the health of our residents and visitors.

Sincerely,

Sarah Y. Park, MD, FAAP
State Epidemiologist
Hawaii Department of Health