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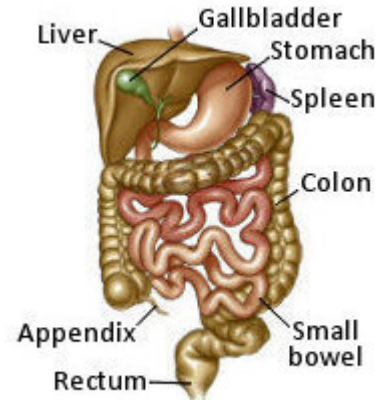
Patient Education:

# Shigella Infection, Pediatric

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# Shigella Infection, Pediatric

Shigella infection occurs when certain bacteria infect the intestines. Symptoms usually start between 2 days and 4 days after ingestion of the bacteria, but they may begin as late as 1 week after ingestion. The illness usually lasts from 5 days to 7 days. Shigella infection can spread from person to person (*contagious*). Most people recover completely. In rare cases, lasting problems may develop, such as arthritis, kidney problems, or abnormal blood counts.



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## CAUSES

The bacteria that cause shigella infection are found in the stool of infected people. You can become infected by:

- Eating food or drinking liquids that are contaminated with the bacteria.
- Touching surfaces or objects contaminated with the bacteria, and then placing your hand in your mouth.
- Having direct contact with a person who is infected. This may occur while caring for someone with illness or while sharing foods or eating utensils with someone who is ill.
- Swimming in contaminated water.

## SYMPTOMS

- Diarrhea, commonly with blood, mucus, or pus.
- Abdominal pain or cramps.
- Fever.
- Nausea.
- Vomiting.
- Loss of appetite.
- Seizures (rare).

## DIAGNOSIS

Your child's caregiver will take your child's history and perform a physical exam. A stool sample may also be taken and tested for the presence of shigella bacteria.

## TREATMENT

Often, no treatment is needed. However, your child will need to drink plenty of fluids to prevent dehydration. Preventing and treating dehydration is important because severe dehydration can cause serious problems. In severe cases, antibiotic medicines may be given to help shorten the illness and to prevent others from being infected. Antidiarrheal medicines are not recommended. They can make your child's condition worse.

## HOME CARE INSTRUCTIONS

- Wash hands well to avoid spreading the bacteria.
- Dispose of diapers properly and clean changing tables with antibacterial cleaners.
- If antibiotics are prescribed, make sure your child takes them as directed. Make sure your child finishes them even if he or she starts to feel better.
- Only give over-the-counter or prescription medicines for pain, discomfort, or fever as directed by your child's caregiver. **Do not** give aspirin to children.
- Make sure your child drinks enough fluids to keep his or her urine clear or pale yellow.
- If your child does not have an appetite, **do not** force your child to eat. However, your child must continue to drink fluids.
- If your child does have an appetite, he or she should eat a normal diet unless your child's caregiver tells you differently. Avoid:
  - Foods and drinks high in sugar. This may worsen diarrhea.
  - Carbonated soft drinks.
  - Fruit juice.
  - Gelatin desserts.
- Record fluid intake and urine output. Dry diapers for longer than usual or poor urine output may indicate dehydration.
- If your child is dehydrated, ask your caregiver for specific rehydration instructions. Signs of dehydration may include:
  - Severe thirst.
  - Dry lips and mouth.
  - Dizziness.
  - Dark urine.
  - Decreasing urine frequency and amount.
  - Confusion.
  - Rapid breathing or pulse.
- Keep all follow-up appointments as directed by your child's caregiver.

## SEEK IMMEDIATE MEDICAL CARE IF:

- Your child is unable to keep fluids down.
- Your child has persistent vomiting or diarrhea.
- Your child has abdominal pain that increases or is concentrated in one small area (*localized*).
- Your child's diarrhea contains increased blood or mucus.
- Your child feels very weak, dizzy, thirsty, or he or she faints.
- Your child loses a significant amount of weight. Your child's caregiver can tell you how much weight loss should concern you.
- Your child who is younger than 3 months has a fever.
- Your child who is older than 3 months has a fever and persistent symptoms.
- Your child who is older than 3 months has a fever and symptoms suddenly get worse.
- Your child has a seizure.

## MAKE SURE YOU:

- Understand these instructions.
- Will watch your child's condition.
- Will get help right away if your child is not doing well or gets worse.

This information is not intended to replace advice given to you by your health care provider. Make sure you discuss any questions you have with your health care provider.

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