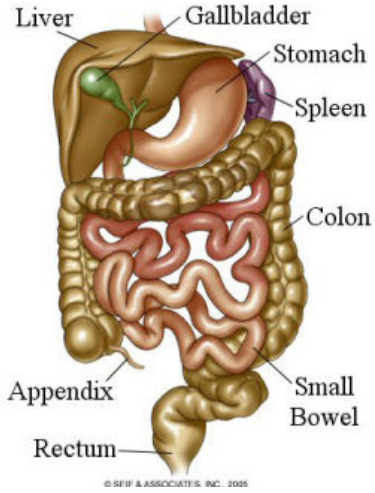
Shigella Infection

Shigella dysentery (inflammation of the bowels) is an infection caused by a bacteria. Shigella dysentery may also be called enteritis.



CAUSES

Shigella bacteria can easily be transmitted by:

- Food or water contaminated with the bacteria.
- Person to person by the fecal-oral route. This means that hands contaminated with human waste can infect by contacting another persons:
  - Food.
  - Mouth.

SYMPTOMS

Typical symptoms of this infection include:

- Diarrhea (commonly with blood or mucus in the stool).
- Belly (*abdominal*) pain or cramps.
- Fever and sometimes feeling sick to the stomach and vomiting (*nausea*).

TREATMENT

In general, antibiotics are given to all persons with this infection. Antibiotics will likely:

- Shorten the course of symptoms.
- Decrease the likelihood that the infection is spread to others.

Young children may rapidly become dehydrated if diarrhea continues along with vomiting. Therefore, medicine may be given to control the nausea if present, either in an oral or a suppository form. Medicines are generally not given for diarrhea.

HOME CARE INSTRUCTIONS FOR NAUSEA AND VOMITING

- For infants: Use medication for fluid restoration such as an oral rehydration solution. After correction of dehydration (loss of body fluids), other clear liquids that are appealing to the child may be added.
- For infants and children: Record fluid intake and urine output. Dry diapers for longer than usual may indicate dehydration. Diet may be advanced as tolerated.
- For children and adults: Drink small amounts of fluids frequently. Drink at least 2 quarts a day for an adult or as your caregiver suggests for a child. Take sips often. Do not overload your stomach with too much fluid at one time. This may worsen the nausea.
- Only take over-the-counter or prescription medicines for pain, discomfort, or fever as directed by your caregiver. For infants and children, it is best not to give aspirin for illnesses with fever. Use medicine for fever as advised by your health care provider.
- Until your diarrhea is under control you should drink clear liquids only. Clear liquids are anything you can see through such as water, broth, apple juice, or soft drinks. Carbonated soft drinks should be allowed to go "flat" before drinking.
- Once you are tolerating clear liquids and keeping them down, you may progress to regular liquids, soups, juices, and ice cream or sherbet. If they are well tolerated, begin to add bland foods to your diet.

HOME CARE INSTRUCTIONS FOR DIARRHEA

Avoid:

- Milk.
- Fruits.
- Tobacco.

- Alcohol.
- Extremely hot or cold fluids.
- Too much intake of anything at one time.

When your diarrhea stops you may add the following foods which help the stool to become more formed:
- Rice.
- Bananas.
- Dry toast.
- Apples without the skin.

Once these foods are tolerated you may add low-fat yogurt and low-fat cottage cheese.

Wash your hands well after using the bathroom to avoid spreading any bacteria or viruses.

SEEK IMMEDIATE MEDICAL CARE IF:
- You are unable to keep fluids down.
- Vomiting or diarrhea becomes persistent.
- Abdominal pain develops or increases or localizes. (Right sided pain can be appendicitis and left sided pain in adults can be diverticulitis).
- You develop a high fever (an oral temperature above 101°F (38.3°C) for over 3 days.
- Diarrhea becomes excessive or contains increased blood or mucus.
- You experience excessive weakness, dizziness, fainting or extreme thirst.
- You experience significant weight loss. Checking weight 2 to 3 times per day in babies and children will help verify adequate fluid replacement. Your caregiver will tell you what loss should concern you or suggest another visit for follow-up.

Record your own weight. Compare this weight on your home scale. Make sure you record the time and date you weighed yourself. Try to check weight at the same times every day.

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