

**MSAD # 13 / RSU #83
Health Alert**

**Gastrointestinal Illness – Shigellosis
Important Notice to Parents
<Date>**

Shigellosis is an infectious disease caused by bacteria from the genus *Shigella*.

Symptoms can include diarrhea, blood, pus, or mucus in the stool, sudden stomach cramps, nausea, vomiting, and fever. Illness typically lasts 4 - 7 days and cases should be treated with appropriate antimicrobial therapy to reduce shedding. Antibiotic resistance is common, so antibiotic sensitivities are strongly recommended.

Symptoms usually begin 24 - 72 hours, range of 12 hours - 5 days, after exposure.

Shigella is transmitted by the fecal-oral route.

A person can spread shigella while symptomatic and continue to shed shigella in their stool for several weeks after symptoms resolve if not treated with appropriate antibiotics. Some people may have no symptoms and can still spread the infection to others.

Any ill individuals should remain home during the symptomatic period and for at least 24 hours after all symptoms resolve. Additionally, antimicrobial therapy should be completed for at least 48 hours and any tests recommended by your primary care provider completed with satisfactory results before returning to school. If your child is sick during the day, please do not send them to school the next day even if they are feeling fine.

Frequent hand washing, particularly after using the restroom, assisting someone with diarrhea and/or vomiting, after contact with animals, after swimming, and before and after food preparation will help prevent contact with the bacteria.

Contact your primary care provider if gastrointestinal symptoms last more than a few days or are severe.

Please contact the school nurse, Mel Chadbourne, RN if you have any questions. More information is also available at the Maine CDC web site.