



NEWS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Knox County Health Department Confirms Shigellosis Cases

Knox County Health Department (KCHD) has received nine confirmed reports of Shigellosis in Knox County. Shigellosis is a contagious bacterial diarrhea illness. To date, the cases have been concentrated in the Powell Community area and the majority of the cases involve students at Powell Elementary.

Because Shigellosis can be spread from person-to-person contact, KCHD would like to make the public aware of the outbreak in order to slow down the spread. KCHD is also working with Knox County Schools to get information to parents about Shigellosis. Important facts to know include:

- It is very easily spread person to person.
- It is spread by the fecal oral route, primarily by persons who fail to wash their hands after using the bathroom.
- It takes 1 to 3 days to develop symptoms after being exposed, but it may take up to a week.
- Please keep your child at home if he or she has diarrhea (do not send them to day care).
- Symptoms are:
 - Diarrhea (two or more loose or watery stools per day – outside of usual bowel pattern); may have blood or mucous in stool.
 - Abdominal cramping
 - Vomiting
 - Fever

If your child is having any of the above symptoms, he/she should be seen by a doctor. A stool sample may be ordered to test for Shigella bacteria.

TREATMENT:

- Supportive treatment, such as fluids
- Most infections resolve in 48 to 72 hours without treatment.
- Although not always necessary, treatment may include antibiotics. Bacteria can be present in the stool for up to four weeks, even after the symptoms of illness resolve.

CAREFUL HAND WASHING WITH SOAP AND WATER IS THE BEST WAY TO PREVENT SPREAD OF SHIGELLOSIS. Teach your child the importance of good hand washing, especially after going to the bathroom and before eating (or putting anything in the mouth).

The Knox County Health Department (KCHD) is committed to promoting public health practices that safeguard and improve quality of life for all residents. KCHD offers an array of services, including medical and dental services, family planning, disease surveillance and control, emergency preparedness, air quality management, environmental services, food preparation oversight in public places, special nutritional programs for women with children and much more. For more information on the Knox County Health Department.