



November/December 2008

Dear Parent:

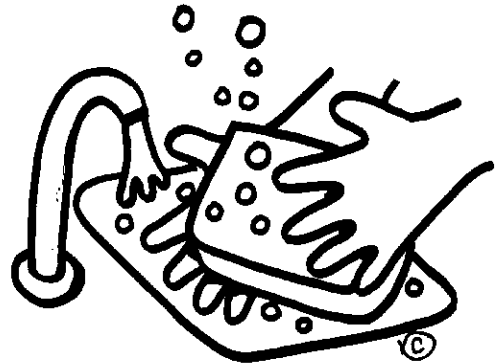
Recently there has been an increase in shigella illness. Many of the cases are young children. These children have diarrhea, fever, stomach cramps, and nausea/vomiting. This lasts about a week, but can last longer. Sometimes it can make the child very sick.

It spreads from one person to another. This happens when a sick person does not wash their hands after using the bathroom. The sick person then touches shared objects and leaves germs from their stool (feces) on them. A healthy person then touches these shared objects and puts the germs into their mouth. This makes the healthy person sick.

You play an important role in helping to stop the spread of this illness. Wash your hands often with soap and water. Be sure to wash them after going to the bathroom and changing diapers. Also wash them before making foods or drinks.

If you have a child with symptoms of shigella:

- Go to the doctor. The doctor can give you medicine to treat this illness.
- Keep your child home from daycare or school while he/she is sick.
- DO NOT SEND YOUR CHILD BACK to daycare or school while he/she is still sick, especially with diarrhea. This puts everyone at the daycare or school at risk. It also hurts the effort to keep the daycare or school clean for everyone.
- Remind your child to wash his/her hands. Have your child use soap and warm water. Rub the hands together for 20 seconds. Rinse them with running water. Dry them with paper towel.
- Clean surfaces and toys often.



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Also, please stay home from parties and gatherings if you or your child is ill. By staying home, you will protect your family and friends from this illness.

Investigating outbreaks of illness and offering education are two of the many ways that the public health department is always working for a safer and healthier Muskegon County. For more information, please visit our website at www.muskegonhealth.net.

Sincerely,

Kenneth A. Kraus
Public Health Director
Public Health – Muskegon County