

Contact: Jean Mueller
Taney County Health Department
320 Rinehart Road
Phone: (417) 334-4544 ext. 224
Cell: (417) 230-0725
Email: muellf@lpha.mopublic.org

Taney County Health Department



Public Health
Prevent. Promote. Protect.
An Accredited Local Public Health Department

*****FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE****

February 11, 2010

Taney County Health Department Investigates Increased Cases of Shigella

The Taney County Health Department has been investigating an increased incidence of Shigellosis (Shigella) in Taney County. Shigella is a highly contagious infectious disease that causes diarrhea. Since October 2009, there have been 26 confirmed cases of shigella and more samples are currently being tested. An increase in the number of cases reported has occurred in the past two weeks.

Robert Niezgoda, Taney County Health Department Epidemiologist, said, “We have a very low number of Shigella cases reported, from 2005 to September 2009 only one case was reported in Taney County.” The Department has been continuously investigating the reported cases to discover a link to transmission of the illness, which is passed from person to person. “We have not identified any connection to water supply, grocery stores, restaurants or daycare facilities,” said Niezgoda. “It appears the recent cases reported in Taney County are spreading from person to person.”

“The confirmed cases are located across the county and have occurred most often in children ages 15 months to 10 years,” said assistant epidemiologist, Kim Foster. The symptoms of Shigella include diarrhea that can be bloody, fever, abdominal cramps, nausea and vomiting. Symptoms may appear one to seven days after exposure, but is most often within 2 to 4 days. Shigella spreads when an infected person does not wash their hands thoroughly with soap and water after using the restroom or changing a diaper. If a person does not wash their hands carefully, they can spread the illness by leaving the germs on surfaces or on food, they have prepared. “For this reason it is very important for anyone who has Shigella-like symptoms to stay home from school, daycare and work, especially work related to food preparation,” said Foster. “The most effective preventive measure is hand washing.” Always wash your hands carefully after using the restroom, changing a diaper or before preparing food. If someone in your household is ill with shigella, take extra measures to clean and disinfect restrooms, toys, and other commonly touched surfaces.

If you experience Shigella-like symptoms, contact your medical provider. Shigella is treatable with antibiotics; however, not all cases require treatment. Those most at risk of complications such as dehydration are the very young and elderly.

For more information about shigella, contact the Taney County Health Department at either location. The Branson office at (417) 334-4544 or the Forsyth office at (417) 546-4725 or visit our website at www.taneycohealth.org.
