

Travelling Abroad?

Shigella is more common in some parts of the world. If you are having sex while abroad/ travelling, familiarise yourself with shigella symptoms, and while abroad, practice safe habits.

- 1 Before you travel pack condoms, lubricants and any medication.

Seek medical attention for symptoms like diarrhoea, cramps or fever during and after the trip.

- 2 Don't forget your **European Health Insurance Card (EHIC)**.

An EHIC lets you get healthcare for free or at a reduced cost in the EU, the EEA and Switzerland. Learn more at ehic.ie.

If you are travelling outside Europe, it is recommended you have travel insurance.

For more information on Shigella

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Know About Shigella?

- 1 **Shigella** is a bacterial gut infection that can cause severe stomach upset. Anyone can get Shigella but certain sexual activities that may involve contact with faeces (poo), even in tiny amounts, increases the chance of getting infected.
- 2 **If you are sexually active**, it is important to know about Shigella and learn how to protect yourself and others.

How do you get Shigella?

Shigella is passed on through **infected faeces (poo)**. This can happen through contaminated food or sexual activity. Only a very small amount of the bacteria is needed to cause infection.

Sex that may involve contact with faeces increases the likelihood of getting shigella. e.g. anal sex, fisting, fingering, rimming, oral sex, handling a condom or sex toy used for anal sex.

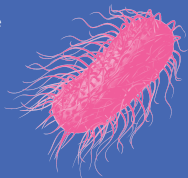
Shigella can also be passed on via unwashed hands.

What are the symptoms?

Symptoms usually develop between 1 and 3 days after (sexual) contact.

Common symptoms are:

- Frequent and explosive diarrhoea.
- Stomach cramps.
- Feeling feverish with flu-like symptoms.
- Some people report vomiting.
- Some people may have blood mixed with diarrhoea.



How do I get tested?

If you suspect you have Shigella, you should contact your healthcare provider who can organise a test.

Shigella is usually diagnosed by sending a stool (poo) sample to the laboratory for testing.

If you picked up Shigella sexually, testing for other STIs should be considered and discussed with your healthcare provider.

How long does it last?

Diarrhoea caused by Shigella usually goes away between 5 and 7 days.

People with a mild infection will generally get better with fluids and rest.

Antibiotics are usually used to help reduce the spread of Shigella to someone else for more severe cases.

Since 2020 many countries (in Europe, and internationally) have reported increases in drug resistant Shigella infections. This means that antibiotics may be less effective, and these cases can be more difficult to treat.

What precautions should I take?

When experiencing symptoms, abstain from sex for at least seven days after they disappear. Additionally, avoid health spas, hot tubs, swimming pools and sharing towels during this recovery period.

If you work in the food industry, healthcare or childcare settings, stay out of work while you have symptoms. You will be advised when you can return to work.

How can I stay safe?

You can lower your chances of getting Shigella during sex by practising safe habits:

- Washing of hands, genital and anal areas before and after sex.
- Using latex gloves for fingering or fisting and dental dams during oral-anal sex.
- Wash and clean sex toys before sharing and between partners.
- Changing condoms between activities and partners.

