

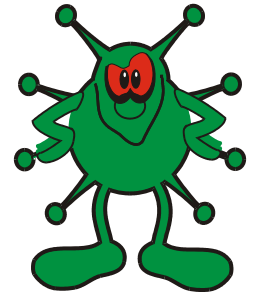


## Dysentery (Dis-en-tree)

### What is Dysentery?

Dysentery is an acute bacterial infection of the gut usually causing watery diarrhoea. It appears in all parts of the world and affects people of all ages. There are four types of organism causing bacillary dysentery;

- *shigella flexneri*,
- *shigella boydii*,
- *shigella dysenteriae and*
- *shigella sonnei*.



*Shigella sonnei* is the germ most frequently found in this country and is responsible for community outbreaks, the other three tend to be imported from abroad.

### Symptoms

The incubation period of Dysentery is anywhere between 8 hours and 7 days although commonly between 1 and 3 days the symptoms include:-

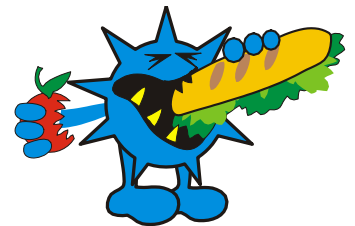
- Watery diarrhoea - sometimes with blood and mucus
- Fever - febrile convulsion may occur in young children
- Nausea and/or vomiting
- Abdominal pain
- General malaise

Illness is usually self limiting, lasting around 4-7 days although prolonged illness can occur. Some patients can carry the organism but experience no symptoms. These people are infectious to others if their hygiene practice is poor

### How does Dysentery spread?

In this country, Dysentery is normally spread person to person. The germs causing dysentery enter the mouth on unwashed hands, these germs then breed rapidly in the bowel.

A lapse in good hygiene practice is the commonest cause of infection, objects such as pens, pencils, toys, cutlery, toilet and door handles etc, can be contaminated by an infected person allowing the germ to be picked up by the next person to use the object.



Food and drink that has been handled by an infected person can be contaminated and cause illness in those consuming it.

## Prevention:

Scrupulous personal hygiene including thorough handwashing. *The use of liquid soaps and paper towels is advised if possible.*

## What to do if you have someone ill or infected with food poisoning in the house

Anyone suffering from or carrying Dysentery SHOULD NOT prepare food for others to eat.



We would recommend that you DO NOT have friends in for meals or to stay with you whilst the infection is present.

Whilst diarrhoea persists, great care should be taken to clean the toilet including taps, door and flush handles after the patient has used it.

- Use a household disinfectant or bleach.
- Use disposable paper tissues for cleaning seat, flushing handle etc.
- Wash hands thoroughly afterwards, preferably with an antibacterial hand wash soap.

Hands should be washed thoroughly with hand soap and hot running water for at least ten seconds, to minimise the risk of cross-contamination.

Cloth towels are not recommended for cleaning or drying as they get dirty quickly and can spread bacteria from one person to another, disposable tissues/towels are recommended.



## Other Precautions

Children should stay away from school until 48 hours after **all** symptoms have ceased. Further advice in this case must be sought from the Environmental Services Department. The school should be informed of the type of illness.

## Can I Still Work?

People who work in food businesses, hospitals or nursery schools SHOULD NOT return to work until 48 hours after all symptoms have ceased. The manager of the food business should be notified of any illness you or any family member, who is ill, may have.

If people are formally excluded from work, they will not normally be required to return to work until 48 hours after **all** symptoms have ceased.

Please remember that you **may** still carry the organism for a number of weeks after the symptoms clear and scrupulous personal hygiene must be observed during this time.

**NOTE: THERE MAY BE TYPES OF FOOD POISONING WHICH WILL REQUIRE YOU TO REMAIN OFF WORK UNTIL CLEARANCE IS GIVEN BY YOUR ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH OFFICER. YOU WILL BE ADVISED IF THIS IS THE CASE.**

For further information, contact your local Environmental Protection Division, telephone number 01932 838383, or in case of continuing illness, consult your family doctor.