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For Immediate Release

**Winnebago County Health Department engages Community Stakeholders during Task Force meeting to bring an end to the current community wide outbreak of Shigellosis.**

The Winnebago County Health Department (WCHD) is reporting additional cases of Shigellosis in our community bringing the new total to 152, since October 2015. The majority of these cases are isolated and have impacted in children in daycare and elementary schools.

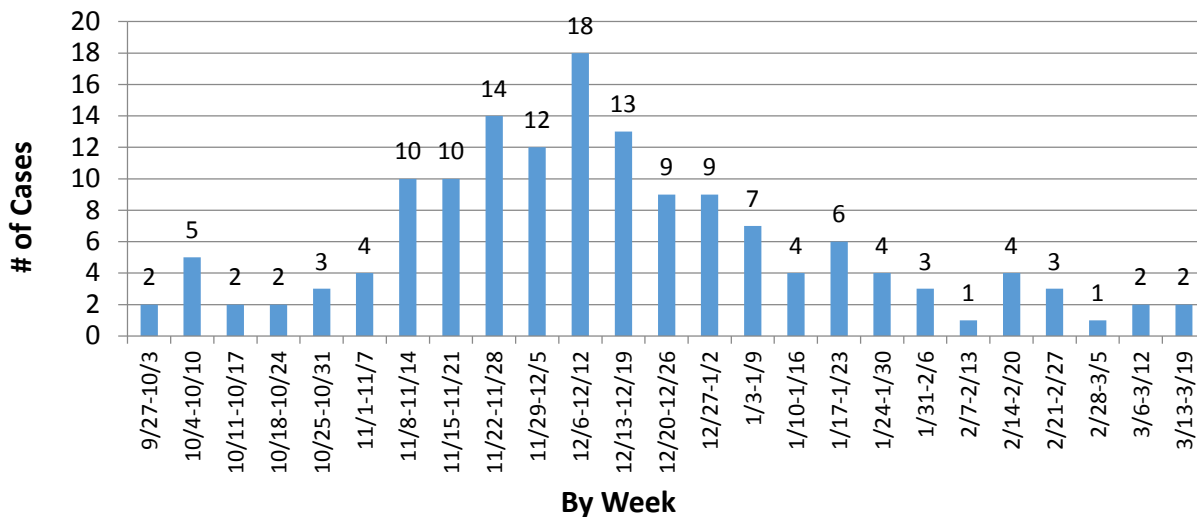
Shigellosis is a diarrheal disease caused by a group of bacteria called Shigella. Symptoms typically start 1 to 2 days after exposure and include:

- Diarrhea (sometimes bloody)
- Vomiting
- Fever
- Abdominal pain

Shigella is very infectious and spread by contaminated hands touching your food or mouth. Hands can become contaminated through a variety of activities, such as touching surfaces (e.g., toys, bathroom fixtures, changing tables, diaper pails) that have been contaminated by stool from an infected person. Hands can also become contaminated with Shigella while changing the diaper of an infected child or caring for an infected person.

The community stakeholders represented schools, daycares, hospitals, community organizations and health department staff. The Task Force was provided an update on the current status of the outbreak as shown in the following graph:

**Epidemic Curve of Laboratory Confirmed Shigellosis Cases by Date of Onset n=152  
Missing=2**



The recommendations from the Task Force include: 1) increase handwashing in the community, and 2) ensure compliance with hand washing recommendations outlined in this release.

“Keeping hands clean is one of the most important steps we can take to avoid getting sick and spreading germs to others. Many diseases and conditions are spread by not washing hands thoroughly with soap and clean, running water,” said Winnebago County Health Department Public Health Administrator, Dr. Sandra Martell.

Handwashing is a practice that everyone at every age can do but children and those with developmental disabilities or cognitive changes may need some extra help and supervision.

## **HAND WASHING RECOMMENDATIONS:**

### **When should you wash your hands?**

- **Before**, during, and after preparing food
- **Before** eating food
- **Before** and after caring for someone who is sick
- **Before** and after treating a cut or wound
- **After** using the toilet
- **After** changing diapers or cleaning up a child who has used the toilet
- **After** blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing
- **After** touching an animal, animal feed, or animal waste
- **After** touching garbage

### **What is the right way to wash your hands?**

- **Wet** your hands with clean, running water (warm or cold), turn off the tap, and apply soap.
- **Lather** your hands by rubbing them together with the soap. Be sure to lather the backs of your hands, between your fingers, and under your nails.
- **Scrub** your hands for at least 20 seconds. Need a timer? Hum the "Happy Birthday" song from beginning to end twice.
- **Rinse** your hands well under clean, running water.
- **Dry** your hands using a clean towel or air dry them.

### **What should you do if you don't have soap and clean, running water?**

- Washing hands with soap and water is the best way to reduce the number of microbes on them in most situations. If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol. Alcohol-based hand sanitizers can quickly reduce the number of microbes on hands in some situations, but sanitizers do **not** eliminate all types of germs and cannot remove visible dirt or grease.

For more information on hand hygiene, visit our website at: [www.wchd.org](http://www.wchd.org). Like us: [facebook.com/Winnebago County Health Department](https://www.facebook.com/WinnebagoCountyHealthDepartment). Follow us: [twitter.com/Winncohealth](https://twitter.com/Winncohealth). Or Contact us at Winnebago County Health Department 401 Division Street, PO Box 4009, Rockford, Illinois 61110, or by phone at 815-720-4000.