

## Dysentery

### What is dysentery?

Dysentery is an infectious illness caused by a type of bacteria called Shigella. The symptoms are diarrhoea, fever, stomach pain and vomiting.

### How did I get it?

It is usually caught from a person who already has the infection. It spreads particularly easily where Hygiene practices are poor and many of those affected are young children. Occasionally it can be caught by eating contaminated food or water.

### What is the incubation period?

This is the delay between the bacteria entering the body and you becoming unwell. This is usually between 1 and 3 days but can be up to 7 days.

### How can I avoid passing it on?

- **Always** wash and dry your hands thoroughly **after** using the toilet, handling soiled bedding/clothes, changing nappies and **before** preparing and eating food.
- Ensure that door and toilet handles, taps and loo seats are cleaned and disinfected regularly.
- Whilst you are ill try to avoid sharing towels and bath water.

### Should I stay off work or school?

You should stay away from work or school until you have had no symptoms for at least 24 hours. You do not need to stay away if you have been in contact with someone who has dysentery if you have no symptoms yourself.

If you are a food handler or working with vulnerable groups, e.g. residents in nursing homes or children in nurseries, you should stay away from work until you have not had any symptoms for at least 2 days.

You should also notify your employer and comply with any company rules regarding clearance to return to work.

If you would like any further information, please contact:

Environmental Services Department  
Business Compliance Section  
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