



Columbus Public Health and Franklin County Board of Health



March 18, 2009

Health Care Providers
Columbus and Franklin County

Dear Provider:

Columbus Public Health (CPH) and Franklin County Board of Health (FCBH) continue to investigate a community outbreak of shigellosis. In 2007 only 15 cases of shigellosis were reported in Franklin County. Last year over 600 cases were reported and the trend continues in 2009. As of March 13, 2009, 97 cases have been reported in Columbus and another 20 cases in suburban Franklin County. Public health investigation so far reveals that the majority of cases are occurring among children who are under 5 years old and are attending child care centers. Adult cases have also been reported. Further investigation is currently underway to identify those in the community most affected and at highest risk, in order to focus education and outreach activities to control the outbreak. We are asking for your assistance.

All lab-confirmed shigellosis cases should continue to be treated with antibiotics to which *Shigella sonnei* is susceptible. Please request **susceptibility testing of all isolates**. These susceptibility reports not only guide treatment of individual patients, but also contribute to summary information about the circulating strains of *Shigella sonnei* in the community and directly impact public health recommendations to health care providers.

Important Treatment Information

Recent susceptibility results for *Shigella sonnei* from Franklin County area hospitals indicate 95% resistance to Ampicillin and 50% resistance to Trimethoprim-Sulfamethoxazole. All isolates have been susceptible to both Ceftriaxone and Ciprofloxacin. In light of these results, CPH and FCBOH recommend that local Health Care Providers **not use Ampicillin or Trimethoprim-Sulfamethoxazole** to treat shigellosis during the current outbreak. In consultation with infectious disease experts at Nationwide Children's Hospital, **antibiotics recommended** for treatment of shigellosis include:

Azithromycin
Cefdinir
Cefixime
Ciprofloxacin

(continued)

For each of these antibiotics, the length of therapy is 5 days. Anti-diarrheal medications are contraindicated. During the shigellosis outbreak, when a patient presents with a chief complaint of diarrhea, please continue to test for common enterics (e.g., *Shigella*, *Campylobacter*, *Cryptosporidium*, *E. coli* O157, *Giardia* and *Salmonella*) and share information about prevention within the household.

These guidelines should be followed until the outbreak ends and the incidence of shigellosis has returned to our community's baseline. We will notify you when the Public Health Advisory is no longer in effect.

Patient Education – Prevention Steps

Recently, we have identified several cases among households and close contacts which support what we know about person-to-person transmission as the primary means of disease propagation. We are asking for your assistance and cooperation in order to prevent additional cases.

As Columbus and Franklin County's Health Commissioners, we are advising that you educate your patients regarding the following practices to limit the spread of this infection:

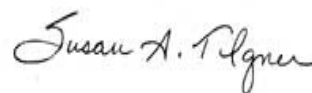
- Practicing good hygiene and sanitation can prevent infections like Shigellosis. Wash hands with soap and water each time you use the bathroom
- It is important to wash your hands after changing diapers or helping others with toileting.
- Wash hands before preparing or serving food and drinks.
- Individuals with diarrhea should not prepare food and drinks for others.
- Students and staff who have diarrhea should not attend school, camps and work until the diarrhea has ceased or they have medical clearance.
- A person with Shigellosis who attends a child care center or works in a sensitive occupation shall be excluded from the child care center or work in the sensitive occupation and may return if diarrhea has ceased and after two consecutive follow-up stool specimens are negative for *Shigella* per OAC 3701-3-13.

If you have questions, contact a Communicable Disease Nurse at 614 645-1474 or 614 462-3160. Information about shigellosis is available on the web at www.publichealth.columbus.gov, www.franklincountyohio.gov/health, www.cdrsinfo.com, www.odh.ohio.gov/pdf/IDCM/shig.pdf and www.cdc.gov.

Thank you for continuing to work with us to keep the public safe and healthy.



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