

Saint Louis City Department of Health

Health Alert
Health Alert

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Acting Director of Health

The Saint. Louis City Department of Health is providing this information to you through the local Health Alert Network (HAN), which is part of a nationwide program to provide rapid mass distribution of information to health providers and others whenever a disease or event threatens the health of our communities. HAN provides for a new level of defense against health threats, including the possibility of bioterrorism.



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DATE: May 21, 2007
SUBJECT: **Physicians Urged To Follow Specific Protocol for Collecting Stool Samples In Suspected Shigella Cases**

Shigella Protocol

On February 22, 2007, the City of St. Louis and St. Louis County health departments announced that the city and county were experiencing an unusually high number of Shigella cases. (See HAN dated February 22, 2007).

The City of St. Louis Department of Health has continued to receive documented cases of Shigella. The majority of the documented cases involve children attending daycare facilities and individuals they have come into contact with.

When physicians come across suspected cases of Shigella they are being urged to follow the protocol below which is recommended by the Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services and the City of St. Louis Department of Health.

A stool specimen should be obtained and sent on any child or adult presenting with a history of diarrhea, particularly if they attend day care or have a household member who has been diagnosed with confirmed Shigella.

The specimen may be sent to the state lab for processing. The patient should be started on an appropriate course of treatment. Many cases are being found to be resistant to Septra and Amoxicillin.

A second culture should be sent.48 hours after completion of treatment.

A child may NOT return to day care until TWO negative cultures have been obtained.

Thank you for your assistance in controlling this outbreak of Shigella.

Shigellosis is a Category I reportable disease. Shigella cases should be reported to the local health department within 24 hours of first knowledge or suspicion by telephone, facsimile transmission or other rapid means of communication.

City of St. Louis Health Department 612-5289 or 612-5284 (weekdays) 972-2794 (after hours)