



## BELGIAN SHIGELLA OUTBREAK LINKED TO CAFETERIA WORKER

### What is *Shigella*?

- *Shigella* is a bacterium that passes from person to person through fecal-oral contamination (that means poop in food, on hands or on surfaces).
- Common symptoms can include blood and mucous in diarrhea, often called dysentery.
- If ill, a person can transmit *Shigella* to others long after symptoms are gone.
- *Shigella* can be transmitted even if the person does not show symptoms.

### What you can do:

- If you're ill with vomit, nausea or diarrhea do not handle food.
- Food handlers should wash hands before preparing food and after going to the bathroom.
- Handwashing steps include: wet hands, apply soap, lather, rinse and dry with a one-use towel.



FOOD  
HANDLERS  
CAN TRANSMIT  
SHIGELLA IN  
THEIR POOP  
WITHOUT  
EVEN SHOWING  
SYMPTOMS



52  
SHIGELLOSIS  
CASES LINKED  
TO ONE FOOD  
HANDLER OVER  
A 2 MONTH  
PERIOD

A recent study in *Epidemiology and Infection* detailed an outbreak of shigellosis linked to eating in a particular Belgian cafeteria. Investigators explored possible situations leading to the illnesses, testing food as well as fecal samples from staff. Following sample analysis and through surveys with staff of recent illnesses and travel, one staff member was identified as the source of the outbreak.

Investigators found that the implicated food handler had traveled to Morocco shortly before the illnesses began to appear in patrons. The staff member returned to work following the trip and did not display symptoms of the illness. Only 13 of the reported 52 cases were confirmed through stool culture. Seven of those cases were found to be the same strain of illnesses as some seen in Morocco at the same time.