

Mission:

To protect, promote & improve the health of all people in Florida through integrated state, county & community efforts.



Ron DeSantis
Governor

Vision: To be the Healthiest State in the Nation

February 14, 2019

Dear Principal,

Since January 1, there has been an increase in the number of *Shigella* cases reported to the Florida Department of Health in Broward County as compared to the same time last year. The majority of these cases were in school aged children.

Symptoms include: watery or bloody diarrhea, abdominal pain, fever, and malaise starting a day or two after exposure. Symptoms usually resolve in 5 to 7 days. People who are sick with shigellosis have *Shigella* germs in their stool while they have diarrhea and for up to a week or two after the diarrhea has gone away. *Shigella* is very contagious; just a small amount of germs can make someone sick. People could get sick by:

- Getting *Shigella* germs on their hands and then touching their food or mouth. This may happen after:
 - Touching surfaces contaminated with germs from stool from a sick person, such as toys, bathroom fixtures, changing tables or diaper pails.
 - Changing the diaper of a sick child or caring for a sick person.
- Eating food that was prepared by someone who is sick with shigellosis.
- Swallowing recreational water (for example, lake or river water) while swimming or drinking water that is contaminated with stool containing the germ.

To prevent the spread of *Shigella* bacteria, please share the following with your staff and parents:

- Wash hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds:
 - After using the toilet
 - After hanging a diaper or assisting anyone with toileting
 - **Note:** Wash child's hands in addition to your own.
- Avoid preparing food for other people while you are sick.
- Try to stay home while you are sick.
- People who work in healthcare, childcare, or the food service industry should follow the guidance of the Florida Department of Health in Broward County about when it is safe to return to work.
- **Children with shigellosis should not attend childcare, school, or group activities while they have diarrhea. They should not return to daycare, school or group activities until at least 48 hours after symptoms have ceased.**
- Avoid swimming until you have fully recovered.

To report a case of Shigellosis or any other reportable disease or to obtain additional information, please call (954) 847-8045. Please visit <https://www.cdc.gov/shigella/infection-sources.html>. Thank you for your cooperation.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Paula Thaqui, MD, MPH".

Paula Thaqui, MD, MPH
Director