

Shigella Could Spread to More Frum Communities (ch"v)

Why?

An outbreak of Shigella, a bacterial illness causing diarrhea, began in August in Brooklyn, NY (Williamsburg and Boro Park). It spread to Lakewood, NJ and Cleveland. As Jewish day schools have their mid-winter break, many families are traveling. This provides an opportunity, G-d forbid, for the disease to spread to other communities.

Symptoms

Symptoms include diarrhea, often with fever or stomach cramps, usually lasting 5-7 days. Diarrhea is sometimes bloody. Some have no symptoms, yet can still transmit the disease to others.

How is the disease transmitted?

Transmission is through the fecal-oral route. Trace amounts of bacteria-containing stool come in contact with someone's hands, and the hands touch the mouth or food, or a surface that another person's hands later touch. The infection can be passed on to others for possibly up to one month after symptoms.

Who is at risk?

Kids aged 2-6 are at highest risk, but even adults get Shigella. Among Orthodox Jews, transmission is usually from a child to another child, teacher or parent. Transmission is most common in daycare/pre-school settings.

When to seek care

If someone is experiencing diarrhea that is severe or bloody, a physician should be consulted.

What can prevent Shigella?

1. Make sure that after using the bathroom, children wipe themselves properly (and the toilet seat is clean), and immediately wash their hands with warm water and soap for 20 seconds.
2. Wash hands with warm water and soap or use alcohol based hand sanitizer carefully and frequently, especially after going to the bathroom, changing diapers, and before preparing food or beverages.
3. After using the bathroom, *negevasser* is not sufficient. Warm water and soap is necessary.
4. Keep soap available at all washing areas, including liquid soap for Shabbos.
5. Have Shabbos-friendly diaper wipes available.
6. Make sure children are wearing the proper size diaper.
7. Disinfect diaper changing areas after using them.
8. Dispose of soiled diapers in closed lid containers.
9. Keep children with diarrhea out of child care settings.
10. Children should not go swimming for at least 2 weeks after symptoms subside.