

## How can I lower the risk from sex?

**Wash your hands, penis, buttocks and sex toys** during and after sex, especially if you're rimming, fingering or handling used condoms and sex toys.

Using condoms for anal sex and latex gloves for fingering or fisting offers protection. A condom can be cut into a square to make a barrier for rimming.

Don't share sex toys or douching equipment.

Use a new condom when switching from anal to oral sex.

There is a risk of shigella from licking skin which has bacteria on it like the buttocks, groin, penis or skin near the buttocks. So after sex having a shower is even better than a wash.

Information for this pamphlet was gathered from

The Terrance Higgins Trust

and

The Center for Disease Control

Kennesaw State University  
**GLBTIQ**  
Resource Center

Information on Shigelliosis Infection

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## *Holy Shigella!*

Information on  
Shigelliosis Infection  
from sex.



Kennesaw State University  
**GLBTIQ**  
Resource Center

## What is Shigellosis?

Shigella infection is a severe stomach upset caused by bacteria found in feces. It's often the cause of food poisoning but can be passed on during sex.

## How is it spread?

Very easily: all it takes is for a tiny amount of bacteria to get into your mouth when participating in anal sex activities.

## What are the symptoms?

You might get stomach cramps, fever and diarrhea (possibly with blood in it) which start up to four days after getting infected and often can last for up to a week.

## What should I do if I think I have it?

Either your doctor or a sexual health clinic can test you for shigella infection. Explain that you might have picked up a gut infection from sex, possibly shigella. The doctor needs to know this so you get the right tests and treatment. A full sexual health check-up is a good idea. Anyone with a bad case of diarrhea should:

### Get tested

If you test positive for shigella infection wait for 48 hours after the symptoms stop before going back to work. If your work involves handling food or contact with patients you should not go back to work until shigella infection has been ruled out by your doctor. If you test positive for shigella you cannot go back to work until given the all clear by a public health official. A person with shigella can be infectious for up to a month.

### During that time if you have shigella (or any severe diarrhea):

**Wash your hands frequently!** Do this after using the toilet and before eating or preparing food. Use warm water and soap. Avoid preparing food for other people while you're ill or until a week after symptoms stop.

### And avoid:

- Sex – until a week after symptoms stop.
- Sharing towels – use separate towels at home, and clean all taps, door handles, toilet handles, levers and seats with hot soapy water frequently.
- Spas/Jacuzzis/hot tubs – you might contaminate the water and infect others.

Shigella infection can be cured with antibiotics. Drinking fluids will stop you losing too much water.