



To:	General Practices, Pharmacists, After-Hours Centres and Emergency Departments in the greater Wellington and Wairarapa regions
From:	Dr Annette Nesdale, Medical Officer of Health
Date:	30/1/2017
Title:	Increase in Shigellosis associated with travel to Samoa

Please distribute the following information to relevant staff in your organisation.

If you would like to receive this by email please advise RPH of your email on rph@huttvalleydhb.org.nz.
All public health alerts are available at www.rph.org.nz (health professionals – public health alerts)

Increase in shigellosis associated with travel to Samoa

Since mid November Regional Public Health (RPH) has been notified of 6 people with confirmed *Shigella flexneri* infection. Shigellosis presents with profuse diarrhoea, frequently bloody, fever and abdominal pain. All the ill people are older adults and acquired the infection in Samoa or from another person with diarrhoea who had been in Samoa. Other regions in NZ have reported an increase in cases who have returned from either Samoa or Tonga.

Shigellosis is highly infectious and our investigations have identified several co-primary and also secondary cases in households. Multiple cases of diarrhoea puts considerable strain on families, particularly when illness stops paid employment.

How can primary care and ED help reduce disease transmission?

1. Ask about recent travel and test for shigellosis when someone with a history of recent travel presents with diarrhoea, especially if blood or mucus are present in stools.
2. Treat confirmed adult cases of shigellosis with 3 days of ciprofloxacin. This will reduce transmission to other people.
3. Ask if any other family members have a similar diarrhoeal illness. If yes, arrange for them to be tested/treated.
4. Advise people that shigellosis is very infectious and that ill people need additional care with hand hygiene, to use a separate towel and wash cloth and not prepare food for others. Ill people should not share a bath with others, especially children, and should be the last person to use the bath water.
5. Advise people with confirmed shigellosis to expect a phone call from RPH and not to return to work or school until 48 hours after their diarrhoea stops. Additional precautions apply to food handlers, health care or child care workers, and children who attend an early childhood centre: these groups will require faecal clearance before returning to usual activities. This will be arranged by RPH.
6. Notify cases promptly to RPH on (04) 570 9002 and include the ill person's current cell phone number.
7. Provide advice to intending travelers about safe water and food and the benefit of seeking medical care promptly if diarrhoea develops during or after travel.

Resources

Shigellosis fact sheet can be accessed at the RPH website at 'Health Information Factsheets' found under the 'Resources' tab www.rph.org.nz/content/c39d0a9a-4d95-4a24-a3cc-f8eb3654db91.cmr