

## HEALTH ADVISORY: Oregon's Rapidly Expanding *Shigella sonnei* Cluster

December 23, 2024

Dear Colleagues, we hope this message finds you well.

Oregon Health Authority (OHA) reported a rapidly expanding cluster of *Shigella sonnei* infections matched by whole-genome sequencing. As of June 7, 2024, Oregon has reported **75 *Shigella sonnei* cases**. All isolates that have been tested for antimicrobial resistance are **resistant to ciprofloxacin and trimethoprim**. Many cases report experiencing homelessness or having regular contact with people experiencing homelessness through work or social interactions. OHA's recommendations for clinicians and laboratories include (list not exhaustive):

### Recommendations for Clinicians

- Please consider testing for Shigella in any person experiencing homelessness who presents with diarrhea.
- Most cases of shigellosis can be managed with supportive care without antimicrobial therapy.
  - Severe cases (e.g., admitted to hospital or septic) may require therapy.
  - Base your therapy on results of antimicrobial susceptibility testing.
- Please share information with patients about how to stop person-to-person transmission.
  - Regular hand washing, avoidance of preparing or sharing food or drugs/paraphernalia with others, and abstaining from sexual contact **until two weeks after symptoms improve** can reduce transmission of Shigella.
- Please obtain accurate patient contact information for public health interviewers, especially for unstably housed individuals who are likely to have Shigella.

### Recommendations for Laboratories

- OHA asks clinical laboratories to promptly forward isolates and specimens testing positive for Shigella by PCR to Oregon State Public Health Lab (OSPHL) for further analysis.

For more information regarding *Shigella*, please contact Madeline LeVasseur  
[Madeline.LeVasseur@oha.oregon.gov](mailto:Madeline.LeVasseur@oha.oregon.gov).

OHA's Health Alert Network (HAN) can be reviewed below.

We appreciate your support of our shared goal of improved community health.

Respectfully,



---

Carolina Amador, MD, MPH  
Public Health Officer



---

April Holland  
Public Health Administrator



## State of Oregon Health Alert Network

Oregon Health Authority (OHA) has identified a rapidly expanding cluster of *Shigella sonnei* infections matching by whole-genome sequencing. Since June 7, 2024, 75 Oregon cases of this subtype have been reported to OHA. 38 (51%) of the 75 cases and 33 (75%) of the cases since October 1, 2024, are residents of Portland-area counties (Multnomah, Clackamas, Washington) and 26 (35%) of the 75 cases are residents of Marion County. All isolates that have been tested for antimicrobial resistance are resistant to ciprofloxacin and trimethoprim. Many cases report experiencing homelessness or having regular contact with people experiencing homelessness through work or social interactions.

Please consider testing for *Shigella* in any person experiencing homelessness who presents with diarrhea. Most cases of shigellosis can be managed with supportive care without antimicrobial therapy. However, severe cases (e.g., admitted to hospital or septic) may require therapy. Given the resistance seen in many isolates and the co-circulation of *Shigella* strains with diverse resistance profiles, please base your therapy on results of antimicrobial susceptibility testing. Clinical laboratories should promptly forward isolates and specimens testing positive for *Shigella* by PCR to Oregon State Public Health Lab for further analysis.

Additionally, please share information with patients about how to stop person-to-person transmission. Regular hand washing, avoidance of preparing or sharing food or drugs/paraphernalia with others, and abstaining from sexual contact until two weeks after symptoms improve can reduce transmission of *Shigella*. Please obtain accurate patient contact information for public health interviewers, especially for unstably housed individuals who are likely to have *Shigella*.

For more information, contact Madeline LeVasseur [Madeline.LeVasseur@oha.oregon.gov](mailto:Madeline.LeVasseur@oha.oregon.gov).