

March 16, 2023

**From the office of the Edmonton Zone Medical Officers of Health
Communicable Disease Advisory: Shigella infections in Edmonton inner city population**

Context:

Due to a number of *Shigella flexneri* cases confirmed in the last three weeks, the *Shigella* outbreak impacting Edmonton Zone inner-city residents was re-opened as of March 9, 2023.

Since August 2022, 213 people with *S. flexneri* have been identified who are related to this outbreak; 146 of these individuals have required hospitalization. The majority of the cases to date are within the city's inner-city population. No outbreak-related deaths have been reported.

Shigellosis is a disease that is commonly associated with diarrhea, as well as fever, nausea and stomach cramps. It can cause severe illness resulting in hospitalization. Transmission occurs when an individual comes into contact with fecal matter from an infected person, and also by eating food contaminated with the bacteria.

Please continue the following preventive measures to avoid spread of infection

- Maintain personal hygiene
- Sanitary disposal and/or laundering of items contaminated with feces
- Wash hands carefully after washroom use and sexual contact, and before preparing or eating food
- Clean and sanitize food contact surfaces such as cutting boards, counter tops and utensils
- Proper food and equipment handling, preparation, and hygiene
- Avoid handling food for others if ill with diarrhea
- Proper and frequent cleaning of washrooms

Clinical Management

1. Shelter Sites
 - i. Implement/reinforce infection control preventive measures.
 - ii. Refer clients for medical attention as appropriate using current assessment tools and processes.
 - iii. Manage and report illnesses as indicated in AHS guidance:
[Guide for Outbreak Prevention and Control in Shelter Sites – September 2022](#)
2. Physicians
 - i. Manage patients as clinically appropriate.
 - ii. For guidance about community treatment, diagnosis, and data collection for this outbreak, please refer to the Edmonton Zone-MOH Shigella Information page: [Shigella | Alberta Health Services](#)
 - iii. Infection prevention and control:
 - Perform hand hygiene regularly, including before and after any contact with the patient or patient environment.
 - Use Contact precautions for any patient with diarrhea. Use Contact and Droplet precautions for any patient with vomiting +/- diarrhea.

For more information:

Please contact the Office of the Edmonton Zone Medical Officer of Health at 780-433-3940.