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PREVENT. PROMOTE. PROTECT.

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Shigella Cases at Highest Level Since 2007

Shigellosis, an infectious disease that affects an average of 100 people each year in Hamilton County, has already sickened more than 200 so far this year, according to the Cincinnati Health Department (CHD) and Hamilton County Public Health (HCPH).

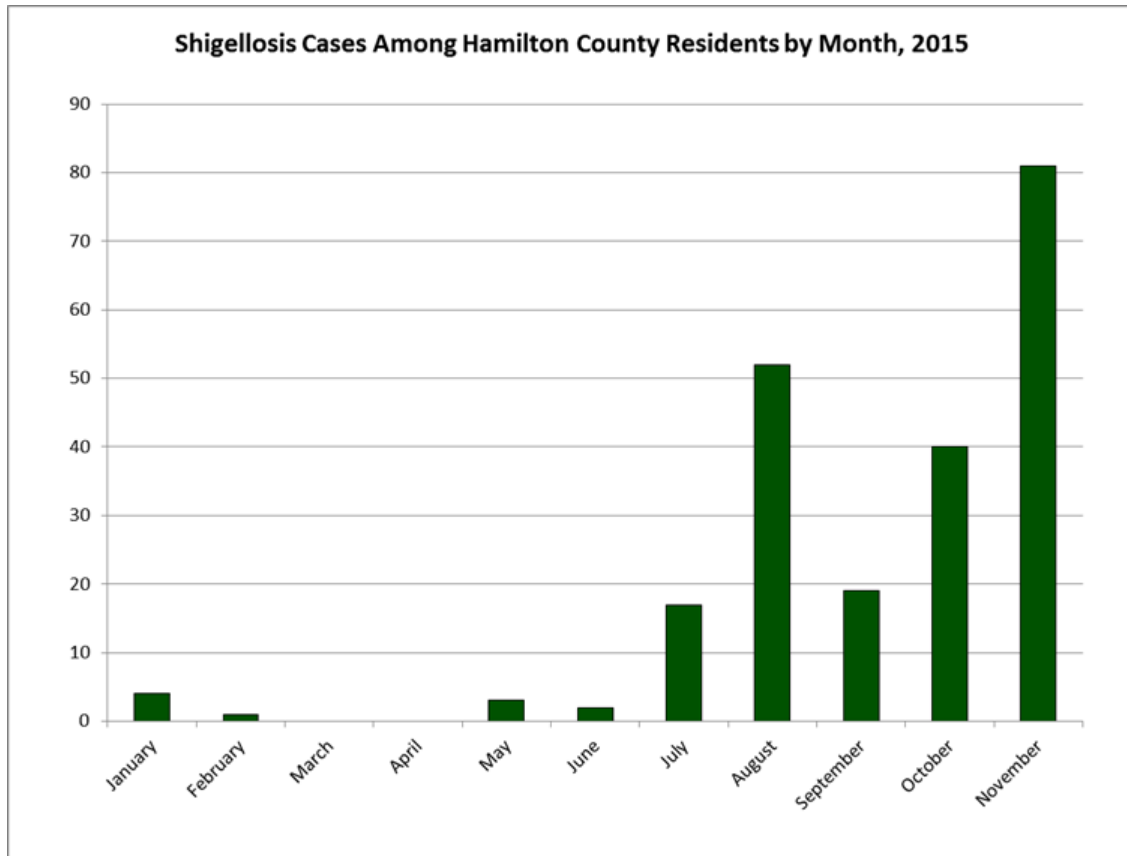
Health officials are urging childcare workers and caregivers to practice frequent handwashing to stop the spread of Shigellosis, a highly contagious form of diarrhea caused by Shigella bacteria.

“We haven’t seen numbers like this since 2007,” said Patrick Burke, CHD epidemiologist. “We’re partnering with caregivers to stem the spread of the disease. We’re also asking parents to follow guidelines for preventing infection, like proper hand hygiene and excluding children diagnosed with Shigellosis from daycare settings,” Burke added.

There is no vaccine for Shigellosis, so the best way to reduce the risk of infection is to wash hands before eating, after using the bathroom or after changing a diaper. The most common symptom of Shigella infection is diarrhea, sometimes accompanied by vomiting, fever, nausea and bloody stool. Symptoms last four to seven days and a person can be contagious for up to two weeks.

“Many people who get Shigellosis do not need medical treatment, so those infections often go unreported,” stated Craig Davidson, Director of Epidemiology at HCPH. Reported cases represent just a fraction of all infections.

(more)



To prevent the spread of Shigellosis, follow these guidelines:

- **Children sick with diarrhea or vomiting should not attend a daycare facility. Caregivers and parents should call their health care provider for complete instructions.**
- Wash hands frequently, especially after handling diapers, before preparing food or feeding, and before eating.
- Teach children to use soap and warm running water to wash hands for at least 20 seconds.
- Monitor young children to ensure adequate handwashing.
- Disinfect surfaces and toys that may come in contact with stool. Follow manufacturer's instructions for disinfection.

City and County health officials are working with daycare centers and medical providers to ensure they have the tools and knowledge they need to control the spread of Shigella. If you think you or your child may be infected with Shigellosis, contact your primary care doctor for a diagnosis.

For more information, visit: <http://www.cdc.gov/shigella/prevention-control> .