



San Mateo County Health System

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PUBLIC HEALTH ALERT– October 22, 2015

HEALTH ALERT: SHIGELLA CASES LINKED TO RESTAURANT EXPOSURE IN SAN JOSE

Situation: On October 17th, 2015, the Santa Clara County Public Health Department was notified by a local hospital of 5 patients with fever and diarrhea who had all eaten at the same restaurant. As of October 21, 2015, subsequent case finding has identified over 90 individuals with fever and diarrhea who ate at **Mariscos San Juan restaurant #3 (205 N. 4th Street) in downtown San Jose, on Friday October 16 or Saturday October 17**. The restaurant was closed on Sunday morning and remains closed.

Of the ill persons, as of October 21, 2015, 24 Santa Clara county residents have tested positive for Shigella, and one has a blood culture growing Shigella sonnei; many of the reported cases have required hospital admission, and 12 have required intensive care. There are others who were seen and not admitted or who were ill but did not seek medical attention.

These cases likely represent only a small proportion of actual cases. Case finding is ongoing; so far **3 laboratory-confirmed cases have been identified in San Mateo County residents**. We need your help to identify additional cases and control the spread of infection.

Background: Shigella infection can be subclinical, but typically causes watery or bloody diarrhea with abdominal pain, fever, tenesmus, and malaise. Shigella is very infectious; just 10–100 organisms are sufficient to cause disease. Transmission occurs via the fecal-oral route and can be spread by eating food prepared by an infected food handler or by direct person-to-person contact. Sexual transmission may also occur.

Young children, the elderly, and HIV-infected individuals with CD4 count <200 are more likely to have severe symptoms including dehydration, bacteremia, and seizures. Although Shigella gastroenteritis is generally self-limited, lasting 5–7 days in an immunocompetent host, untreated individuals may shed the organism in stool for up to 6 weeks. Shortening the duration of shedding with antibiotics can reduce the risk of person-to-person spread. Due to growing antimicrobial resistance in both developing and developed countries, antibiotic susceptibility testing is essential.

Actions requested of clinicians:

1. **Suspect Shigella gastroenteritis** in persons presenting with fever and diarrhea who ate at Mariscos San Juan at the 4th Street location in San Jose or who had contact with an ill person who recently ate at that restaurant.
2. **Test with stool culture and order antimicrobial susceptibility testing.** If patient is ill enough to require hospitalization, obtain blood cultures.
3. **Tailor therapy** based on results of antimicrobial susceptibility testing, recognizing that routine antimicrobial susceptibility tests for Shigella may not include some commonly available oral antibiotics.
4. **Report** suspect and confirmed cases to San Mateo County Communicable Disease Control by faxing in a Confidential Morbidity Report (CMR) available at smchealth.org/communicablediseasereporting or by calling 650-573-2346 Monday through Friday 8:00 am to 5:00 pm. After hours, call 650-363-4981 and ask to speak to the on-call Health Officer.
5. **Educate** patients about the importance of meticulous hand washing and avoiding any activities that could create opportunities for fecal-oral spread. If your patient is a food handler, child/elder care worker, or a healthcare worker, please notify us when you report the case.

Additional Information: The Santa Clara County Department of Public Health will provide updates on this outbreak at sccphd.org/diseases. You may also visit our website at smchealth.org/shigella. For additional information about Shigella, please visit the CDC website: cdc.gov/shigella/resources.html.