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For Immediate Release

Winnebago County Health Department reports an increase in the number of confirmed Shigellosis Infection cases in Winnebago County

The Winnebago County Health Department (WCHD) is reporting an increase of Shigellosis Infection in our community with 22 confirmed cases since October 2015. The majority of these cases are in children in daycare and elementary schools. The age range is 8 months to 59 years of age.

Shigellosis is a diarrheal disease caused by a group of bacteria called Shigella. Every year, about 18,000 laboratory confirmed cases of Shigella are reported in the United States: 1,300 in Illinois. In 2014, Winnebago County reported 22 confirmed cases.

The Winnebago County Health Department is working closely with local healthcare partners, daycares, and elementary schools in Winnebago County. "The spread of Shigella from an infected person to other persons can be stopped by careful handwashing with soap and water. Frequent, supervised handwashing of all children should be followed in daycare facilities and in homes with young children (including children in diapers). When possible young children with Shigella infection who are still in diapers should not be in contact with uninfected children" said Winnebago County Health Department Public Health Administrator, Dr. Sandra Martell.

Transmission of Shigella occurs when people put something in their mouths or swallow something that has come into contact with stool of a person infected with Shigella.

This can happen when:

- Contaminated hands touch your food or mouth.
- Hands can become contaminated through a variety of activities, such as touching surfaces (e.g., toys, bathroom fixtures, changing tables, diaper pails) that have been contaminated by stool from an infected person.
- Hands can also become contaminated with Shigella while changing the diaper of an infected child or caring for an infected person.

Common symptoms typically start 1 to 2 days after exposure and include:

- Diarrhea (sometimes bloody)
- Fever
- Vomiting
- Abdominal pain

Transmission of shigellosis can be greatly reduced using the following strategies:

- Carefully washing your hands with soap during key times:
 - After using the toilet
 - Before eating
 - After changing a diaper or helping to clean another person who has defecated (pooped).

If you notice any of these symptoms in you or your child, you are advised to:

- Contact your physician
- Stay home from work or school
- Notify school or your employer

Treatment:

- Shigellosis can usually be treated with antibiotics
- Persons with mild infection will usually recover without antibiotic treatment in 5 to 7 days
- Increase intake of fluids and get plenty of rest

For more information on Shigella, please call the Winnebago County Health Department at 815-720-4050. To learn more about shigellosis, visit the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention: <http://www.cdc.gov/shigella>, or the Winnebago County Health Department at www.wchd.org.