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For Immediate Release

Winnebago County Health Department continues to see new cases of confirmed Shigellosis in school aged population. As the holiday season approaches, it is a good time to remind teachers and parents about the importance of teaching children good handwashing techniques.

The Winnebago County Health Department (WCHD) is reporting additional cases of Shigellosis in our community bringing the new total to 34, since October 2015. The majority of these cases are isolated and have impacted in children in daycare and elementary schools.

“With the approaching holiday season, it is very important that role models, teachers and parents not only teach good handwashing techniques but also demonstrate the behavior,” said Health Promotion Supervisor, Jennifer Schnepf.

“Keeping hands clean is one of the most important steps we can take to avoid getting sick and spreading germs to others. Many diseases and conditions are spread by not washing hands thoroughly with soap and clean, running water,” said Winnebago County Health Department Public Health Administrator, Dr. Sandra Martell.

When should you wash your hands?

- **Before**, during, and after preparing food
- **Before** eating food
- **Before** and after caring for someone who is sick
- **Before** and after treating a cut or wound
- **After** using the toilet
- **After** changing diapers or cleaning up a child who has used the toilet
- **After** blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing
- **After** touching an animal, animal feed, or animal waste
- **After** touching garbage

What is the right way to wash your hands?

- **Wet** your hands with clean, running water (warm or cold), turn off the tap, and apply soap.
- **Lather** your hands by rubbing them together with the soap. Be sure to lather the backs of your hands, between your fingers, and under your nails.
- **Scrub** your hands for at least 20 seconds. Need a timer? Hum the "Happy Birthday" song from beginning to end twice.
- **Rinse** your hands well under clean, running water.
- **Dry** your hands using a clean towel or air dry them.

What should you do if you don't have soap and clean, running water?

- Washing hands with soap and water is the best way to reduce the number of microbes on them in most situations. If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol. Alcohol-based hand sanitizers can quickly reduce the number of microbes on hands in some situations, but sanitizers do **not** eliminate all types of germs and cannot remove visible dirt or grease.

For more information on hand hygiene, visit our website at: www.wchd.org. Like us: [facebook.com/Winnebago County Health Department](https://facebook.com/WinnebagoCountyHealthDepartment). Follow us: twitter.com/Winncohealth. Or Contact us at Winnebago County Health Department 401 Division Street, PO Box 4009, Rockford, Illinois 61110, or by phone at 815-720-4000.