

# **Environmental Services**

# **Dysentery**





## **What is Dysentery?**

Dysentery is an infection of the bowels (tummy) caused by germs.

## **How is it caught?**

Germs spread from person to person mainly when someone has diarrhoea (loose, runny bowel motions). Staying away from other people whilst ill and thorough hand washing and drying are the most important factors in preventing spread. Towels must not be shared.

Dysentery is very infectious and can very easily spread, particularly amongst young people.

Children in nappies are especially likely to transmit the germ to others.

## **What are the symptoms?**

- Diarrhoea
- Vomiting
- tummy pains
- probably a temperature

## **How can it be prevented?**

The most important thing is for people with diarrhoea to keep away from others until their bowel motions have returned to normal. The illness normally clears up after a few days. Very young babies with severe diarrhoea can quickly become dehydrated. If the child is becoming listless with loose skin then the doctor must be called immediately. Most people will recover without any treatment from the doctor.

Children with dysentery must not attend school or nursery and must not play out whilst they still have diarrhoea.

Once the bowel motions have been normal for 48 hours everyday activity, including returning to work or school, may be resumed.

Because children are so much of a risk when they have dysentery, they should not attend nursery until 14 days after they first became ill.

## **Wash Hands**

### **After**

- going to the toilet
- dealing with sick people
- handling their bedding
- handling their clothes
- contact with sick room equipment
- changing the baby's nappy
- preparing food

### **Before**

- preparing or serving food
- eating meals
- going out

## **Care with excreta and soiled articles**

At home an ill person should normally use the toilet. If the urinals and bed pans have to be used, their carer should, if possible, wear disposable plastic gloves and then wash their hands after attending the patient.

Soiled clothing and bed linen should be washed in a domestic washing machine with a 'hot cycle'.

If the amount of soiling makes this difficult, as much faecal material as possible should be flushed away in running water, preferably into the toilet bowl.

Where this cannot be done, the soiled article should be soaked in the bath using water containing a household disinfectant.

Plastic gloves should be worn if possible and the hands must be thoroughly washed afterwards.

The bath must be rinsed thoroughly and disinfected before being used again.

After loading, the outside surfaces of the washing machine should be wiped down with a suitable disinfectant.

This is especially important if the machine is where children are likely to play.

### **Children with vomiting or diarrhoea**

Children with symptoms due to dysentery should not attend school until fully recovered with normal bowel motions for at least 48 hours.

Children who attend a nursery must stay away until 14 days after they first become ill.

In some circumstances they might have to stay away a bit longer; advice will be given by the infection Control and Surveillance Unit about individuals.

To prevent the spread of infection, children off school or nursery because of diarrhoea must not play out with other children until they have recovered.

### **Cleaning**

Using detergent and water, clean the following at least twice a day:

- toilet seats
- flush handles
- wash-hand basin taps
- toilet doors

Bed pans and urinals should be emptied into the toilet bowl and then washed with disinfectant and rinsed.

After cleaning up diarrhoea or vomit, the surface should be washed with detergent and water, disinfected, rinsed and allowed to dry. Cloths used for cleaning must also be disinfected, rinsed and allowed to dry.

## **Disinfectant**

Different brands and types of disinfectant may be used; a good quality bleach or a pine scented disinfectant made to a British Standard (BS5197 or 6426) is preferred.

Take special care to dilute any disinfectant as instructed by the manufacturer.

Ensure that children do not have access to the solution.

Be careful if using bleach as it will remove the colour from most fabrics and floor coverings and can burn the skin.

## Further Information

For more information about dysentery contact:

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For information on food safety please visit our website

<http://www.rochford.gov.uk> follow the links from Business to Food Safety or telephone 01701 318045.



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