

## 7 December 2017: *Shigella* gastroenteritis rise in Auckland

- There have been seven cases of shigellosis in the last four weeks
- No direct links found so far, but most are of Tongan ethnicity living in South Auckland
- One possible cause is raw or marinated fish imported from the Pacific

### Rise in *Shigella* notifications

The number of notifications of gastroenteritis caused by *Shigella flexneri* has increased recently, with seven cases from mid-November to early December not linked to overseas travel.

Investigation to date has not indicated direct links between cases, other than that most are of Tongan ethnicity living in South Auckland. None of these people have travelled overseas recently.

One possible cause being investigated by Auckland Regional Public Health Service (ARPHS) is eating marinated or raw fish or shellfish, possibly imported from Pacific countries.

Most *Shigella* cases in Auckland result from travel to or from India or the Pacific. This outbreak started during November when large numbers of visitors from the Pacific came to Auckland.

Shigellosis commonly presents as diarrhoea with vomiting, abdominal cramps and tenesmus. Faeces may contain blood and mucus.

### Patients presenting with symptoms suggestive of shigellosis

For patients presenting with symptoms suggestive of shigellosis, we are encouraging practitioners to:

- Ask about risk food such as marinated or raw fish
- Ask patients about recent travel to the Pacific and Asia, or contact with visitors from these regions
- Request stool samples
- Notify ARPHS on clinical suspicion.

In most cases, oral rehydration and symptomatic management are sufficient. Antibiotic treatment is not usually indicated, and antibiotic resistance for *Shigella* is increasing globally, including to ciprofloxacin.

People with any gastroenteritis symptoms should stay away from work or education until at least 24 – 48 hours after symptoms stop.

Further information for patients is available on the following sites

- [Information on Shigella](#) on the US CDC website
- <https://www.safetravel.govt.nz/>