



To: Emergency Medical Alert Network (EMAN) Participants  
Date: October 5, 2006

**Increased Reports of *Shigella Sonnei* (Group D)**

Since August 1, 2006, there has been a significant increase in laboratory-confirmed *Shigella sonnei* cases reported to the Community Epidemiology Branch. Several clusters of *S. sonnei* have also been identified, and public health clearance has been initiated for numerous persons in occupations such as food handling, child care and health care.

Given the low infective dose (10-100 organisms) of *Shigella* and the significant increase in reported cases, health care providers are requested to educate patients with diarrhea to practice good hand hygiene, especially after using the restroom, and to ask patients about their occupation.

Patients working in food handling, health care or child care, should be educated about not performing these activities while symptomatic with diarrhea, and should be told not to resume these activities until public health clearance has been given. Children with diarrhea should also not attend day care settings until cleared.

Health care providers are reminded to promptly report all laboratory-confirmed cases of Shigellosis. Suspect cases should also be reported if they are symptomatic with diarrhea and they are 1) working in food handling, child care or health care, or 2) attend day care settings. Mandated public health clearance will likely be initiated.

Healthcare providers are encouraged to perform stool testing for *Shigella* in patients presenting with compatible symptoms, and to send isolates identified as *Shigella* species to the San Diego County Public Health Laboratory (619-692-8500) for confirmation.

Thank you for your continued cooperation.

**Emergency Medical Alert Network (EMAN)**  
County of San Diego, Health & Human Services Agency  
Community Epidemiology Branch