



ST. CLAIR COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT

19 Public Square, Suite 150, Belleville, IL 62220

NEWS RELEASE

Date: 10/2/2024

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St. Clair County Health Department is investigating the cause of a cluster of gastrointestinal illness

Belleville, IL – October 2, 2024 - The St. Clair County Health Department is investigating the cause of a cluster of gastrointestinal illnesses primarily among customers of the LongHorn Steakhouse located at 6115 North Illinois Street, Fairview Heights, Illinois, impacting individuals residing in multiple jurisdictions. Restaurant representatives have been cooperating with health department officials.

It has been determined that some of the illnesses were caused by Shigellosis, an infectious disease caused by a group of bacteria called Shigella. The investigation is ongoing and the health department is working closely with the Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH) toward control and prevention of disease transmission.

As of the afternoon of October 2, 2024, the health department has received 14 Shigella reports from people testing positive. Twelve (12) of the positive individuals dined at the LongHorn establishment between September 21st and 22nd, 2024. Six (6) cases have been hospitalized.

[Shigella infection](#) causes fever and diarrhea, which may become bloody. These symptoms occur one to two days after coming in contact with the bacteria. Symptoms typically last 5 to 7 days, but some people may experience symptoms anywhere from a few days to 4 or more weeks. People with diarrhea should contact their doctor if they have fever, bloody or prolonged diarrhea, severe stomach cramping or dehydration. Shigella cases should quickly be reported to the local health department by health care providers and laboratories. Health care providers in the area should consider the diagnosis of Shigella infection in persons with compatible symptoms.

Disease transmission occurs when Shigella bacteria pass from one infected person to the next. Shigella infections also may be acquired from eating contaminated food. The



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bacteria are present in the diarrheal stools of infected persons while they are sick and for a few weeks afterwards. Most infections occur when the germ passes from the stool or soiled fingers of one person to the mouth of another person.

The spread of Shigella from an infected person to other persons can be stopped by careful hand washing with soap and water, particularly after using the restroom. Frequent, supervised hand washing of all children should be followed in homes with young children (including children in diapers). When possible, young children with a Shigella infection who are still in diapers should not be in contact with uninfected children. People who have shigellosis should not prepare food or beverages to be consumed by others until they have been shown to no longer be carrying the Shigella bacterium.

If you or a family member have eaten at the LongHorn Steakhouse located at 6115 North Illinois Street, Fairview Heights, Illinois from September 21st to present and developed diarrheal illness within 12 hours to four days after eating, please consult with your physician. More information on [shigellosis](#) is available from the Centers for Disease Control (CDC).

The St Clair County Health Department will release more information as the investigation continues.

About the St. Clair County Health Department

The St. Clair County Health Department, nationally accredited by the Public Health Accreditation Board (PHAB), works to protect, promote, and improve the health of all people in St. Clair County. Learn more about the St. Clair County Health Department at SCCHealthDept.com. For more information, please contact [email Brenda Fedak](mailto:Brenda.Fedak@stclair.org) at or via phone at 618-233-7703 ext. 4420

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