Shigella causes severe diarrhoea and is often mistaken for food poisoning. It's caught from bacteria in shit getting into your mouth during sex.

GAY AND BISEXUAL MEN ARE PARTICULARLY AT RISK

WHAT ARE THE SYMPTOMS?

You will get diarrhoea lasting more than 48 hours (often with blood in it), normally with stomach cramps and fever.
Symptoms usually start within four days of getting infected.

Public Health England

Terrence Higgins Trust

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GOOD SESSION?
BAD CASE OF DIARRHOEA?
MAYBE IT'S...

SHIGELLA

HOW IS SHIGELLA SPREAD?

Very easily - all it takes is for a tiny amount of bacteria to get into your mouth.

HOW CAN I AVOID GETTING SHIGELLA FROM SEX?

- **Wash your hands** (and arse and dick too if you can) during and after sex, especially if you're rimming, fingering or handling used condoms and sex toys.
- Using condoms for anal sex and latex gloves for fingering or fisting offers protection. A condom can be cut into a square to make a barrier for rimming.
- Don't share sex toys or douching equipment.
- There is a risk of Shigella from licking skin which has bacteria on it like the buttocks, groin, dick or skin near the arse. So after sex having a shower is even better than a wash.

WHAT SHOULD I DO IF I THINK I MIGHT HAVE IT?

Shigella infection is easily cured with antibiotics. Visit your doctor or a sexual health clinic to get tested, explaining you may have picked up a gut infection from sex, possibly Shigella. The doctor needs to know this so you get the right tests and treatment. A full sexual health check-up is a good idea.

Anyone with a bad case of diarrhoea should:

- Drink fluids to stop losing too much water.
- Not go back to work until Shigella infection has been ruled out by a doctor, if work involves handling food or contact with patients.

Get tested – and if you have Shigella:

- Wait for 48 hours after the symptoms stop before going back to work.
- You cannot go back to work until given the all clear by a public health official if your work involves handling food or contact with patients.

A person with Shigella can be infectious for up to a month. During that time if you have Shigella (or any severe diarrhoea):

Wash your hands frequently!

Do this after using the toilet and before eating or preparing food. Use warm water and soap. Avoid preparing food for other people while you're ill or until a week after symptoms stop.

And avoid:

- Sex – until a week after symptoms stop.
- Sharing towels – use separate towels at home, and clean all taps, door handles, toilet handles, levers and seats with hot soapy water frequently.
- Spas/jacuzzis/hot tubs – you might contaminate the water and infect others.

FOR MORE INFORMATION CALL TERRENCE HIGGINS TRUST ON 0808 802 1221 OR VISIT WWW.THT.ORG.UK/SHIGELLA