



## **ALERT FOR CLINICIANS**

### **New treatment guidelines for shigellosis in Western Australia**

#### **KEY POINTS**

- There is ongoing transmission of *Shigella* infections (shigellosis) in WA.
- Shigellosis transmission most commonly occurs in people living in remote regions.
- Multi-drug resistant (MDR) shigellosis has also emerged in WA in recent years.
- There are new guidelines for the [treatment of shigellosis in remote regions, MDR shigellosis and shigellosis cases with other scenarios](#).

#### **What is the issue**

- Confirmed *Shigella* infections in WA are acquired during overseas travel or in WA. From 2018-2021, there were an average of 26 cases acquired overseas and 102 cases acquired in WA.
- Of the confirmed cases acquired in WA, most reside in remote regions, with a rate of infection at least 10 times that of metropolitan Perth.
- Most *Shigella* strains from patients living in remote regions are non-MDR and thus can be treated with oral antibiotics. Treatment can help reduce the high rate of infections in these regions.
- However, there has been an increase in patients diagnosed with MDR *Shigella* strains and who acquired their infection in WA. The most prevalent MDR strain in WA is resistant to all available oral antibiotics. Treatment can help prevent transmission of these MDR strains.
- There are relatively low rates of non-MDR shigellosis in non-remote regions and a low risk of ongoing transmission in these communities.

#### **How does this change the management of patients with shigellosis?**

- Antibiotic treatment is recommended for **ALL** shigellosis cases living in remote regions of WA. The first line of treatment is oral ciprofloxacin.
- Antibiotic treatment is recommended for **ALL** confirmed MDR shigellosis patients, including asymptomatic patients and symptomatic suspected patients. The first line of treatment is IV ceftriaxone.
- Antibiotic treatment is generally not recommended for shigellosis cases not living in remote regions or have non-MDR shigellosis, as illness is usually a self-limiting. Refer to the [Therapeutic Guidelines](#) (TG).
- Antibiotic treatment is recommended for shigellosis cases with severe disease or who are immunocompromised, as detailed in the [Therapeutic Guidelines](#) (TG).
- For further details on treatment, follow the [Guideline: Treatment for Shigella infections \('shigellosis'\) in WA](#).
- Clinicians should seek advice from an infectious disease physician if required.
- The [fact sheet on shigellosis](#) can be helpful when providing further advice to the patient.

For further assistance with the public health management of cases, contact your local [public health unit](#).

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