

Typhoid Fever Fact Sheet

Typhoid fever is a life threatening illness caused by the bacterium *Salmonella typhi*

Anyone can get ill after exposure to *Salmonella typhi* bacteria. Travelers visiting developing countries are at the greatest risk for getting typhoid fever.

The infection is spread directly from person to person or through contaminated food or water

Some infected persons may not show any symptoms (called typhoid fever “carriers”), but can spread the bacteria to others through their feces and urine for many years. Animals do not carry *Salmonella typhi*.

Symptoms start 3 days to 2 months (usually 7 to 14 days) after exposure and may include:

- Fever
- Headache
- Tiredness
- Loss of appetite
- Red spots on chest or back
- Constipation (in adults)

Infection can be diagnosed by detecting the bacterium in the stool

The bacteria may also be identified in blood and other body fluids.

Typhoid fever should be treated with antibiotics

Infection can be prevented by:

- Washing hands after using the toilet or changing diapers.
- Washing hands before preparing any food or drink and before eating.
- Washing hands after handling raw meat or poultry (before touching anything else).
- Avoiding unpasteurized milk and boiling all untreated water.
- Avoiding raw shellfish and unwashed, raw fruits and vegetables.
- Excluding foodhandlers, health care and child care workers, children in child care, or anyone in the family of such people. People who have typhoid fever should contact their local health department to get specific recommendations.

A vaccine is available to prevent typhoid fever in certain situations

- The vaccine provides some protection for persons traveling to areas where the disease is common. The vaccine is not routinely recommended for those who live in areas where typhoid fever is uncommon, unless there is high occupational risk for infection (such as some laboratory personnel).
- Persons traveling to areas where typhoid fever is common need to be careful about what foods and water are consumed.
- Typhoid vaccine is also recommended for persons living in a household with a typhoid fever carrier.