

Typhoid Fever **FACTSHEET**

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What is Typhoid Fever?

Typhoid fever is a bacterial infection of the intestinal tract and occasionally the bloodstream. It is a serious infection that can be life threatening.

Who gets Typhoid Fever?

Anyone can get typhoid fever, but the greatest risk exists to travelers visiting other countries where typhoid fever is common.

What are the symptoms of Typhoid Fever?

The symptoms of typhoid fever may be mild or severe. They may include sustained fever (may be as high as 103 to 104 degrees), weakness, abdominal or stomach pains, headache, or loss of appetite. In some cases, patients have a rash of flat, rose-colored spots. The liver and spleen may be enlarged. In adults, constipation is more common than diarrhea.

How is Typhoid Fever spread?

The bacteria that cause typhoid fever are spread through contact with the feces (stool) and urine of a person who is infected or "carrying" the bacteria. This contact can occur in several ways: by eating or drinking food or water contaminated by feces and urine, and by eating or drinking a food or a beverage prepared by a person "carrying" the bacteria who did not wash their hands properly.

How soon do symptoms appear?

Symptoms usually appear from three days to one month after being infected. Most people have symptoms from eight to fourteen days after exposure. The length of time it takes for symptoms to appear is related to how much of the bacteria you were exposed to.

Is a person with Typhoid Fever contagious?

Yes, a person with typhoid fever is contagious. The person can continue to carry the bacteria in their intestinal tract (bowel) even after the acute phase of the disease is over. This is known as the "carrier stage", and it may last for an extended period of time.

How is Typhoid Fever treated?

A. There are several antibiotics available to treat typhoid fever. The person may be hospitalized due to the severity of the disease.

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Is there a vaccine for Typhoid Fever?

A. Yes, there is a vaccine available for typhoid fever. The vaccine is generally given to those people traveling to developing countries where significant exposure may occur.

Should a person with Typhoid Fever be excluded from work or school?

A. A person with typhoid fever is usually too ill to attend work or school during the acute phase of the disease. Once recovered, restrictions may be placed on some persons performing certain jobs, such as food handlers and health care professionals, or on young children returning to childcare. Check with your local health department for details on work restrictions.

Can Typhoid fever be prevented?

Typhoid fever can be prevented by the following:

- If traveling to areas where typhoid fever occurs, get immunized.
- Avoid risky food and drinks.
- If you drink water, buy it bottled or bring it to a rolling boil for one minute before you drink it. Bottled carbonated water is safer than uncarbonated water.
- Ask for drinks without ice unless ice is made from bottled or boiled water.
- Avoid Popsicles and flavored ices that may have been made with contaminated water.
- Eat foods that have been thoroughly cooked and that are still hot and steaming.
- Avoid raw vegetables and fruits that cannot be peeled. Vegetables like lettuce are easily contaminated and are very hard to wash well.
- When you eat raw fruits or vegetables that can be peeled, peel them yourself. Wash hands with soap and water before peeling. Do not eat the peelings.
- Avoid foods and beverages from street vendors. It is difficult for food to be kept clean on the street, and many travelers get sick from food bought from street vendors.

Want more information?

Information about typhoid fever and other related health topics can be found at the website www.cdc.gov. The DC Department of Health promotes the health and safety of the District residents.

