



Indiana State Department of Health

Epidemiology Resource Center

Quick Facts

About...Typhoid Fever (*Salmonella Typhi*)

What is typhoid fever?

Typhoid fever is a life-threatening illness caused by *Salmonella Typhi*, which is found in the stool of an infected person. Unlike other *Salmonella* bacteria, *Salmonella Typhi* is not found in animals. Typhoid fever is rare in the United States and is usually related to travel to an area where typhoid fever is common.

What are the symptoms of typhoid fever?

- Fever (can be as high as 104°F)
- Chills
- Weakness
- Headache
- Stomach pains
- Loss of appetite
- Nausea
- Vomiting
- Diarrhea or constipation
- Flat, rose-colored rash

Symptoms often start within 8-14 days (range of 3-60 days) after exposure. The illness can be mild with a low-grade fever or severe with multiple symptoms.

How is typhoid fever spread?

Salmonella Typhi is passed in the stool and people become ill by ingesting stool from an ill person. Spread can occur by food or drinks that have been handled by a person who is shedding *Salmonella Typhi* or if sewage contaminated with *Salmonella Typhi* gets into the water used for drinking or washing food. It can also be spread by touching contaminated items, such as dirty diapers or linens, and then touching your mouth.

Who is at risk for getting typhoid fever?

Anyone can become ill, but young children, older adults, pregnant women, and people with weakened immune systems (such as people on cancer drugs and with organ transplants) are at high risk for illness.

How do I know if I have typhoid fever?

A person having diarrhea longer than 24 hours should visit a doctor. The doctor may collect a stool or blood sample to test.

How is typhoid fever treated?

Typhoid fever can be treated with appropriate antibiotics. Most people who take medication get well. It is very important to finish the entire course of medication, even if you begin to feel better. Stopping your medication too soon may lead to antibiotic resistance and you may still have the bacteria in your body.

How is typhoid fever prevented?

If you are traveling to an area where typhoid fever is common, follow these guidelines:

- Get vaccinated: To work, the vaccination must be completed at least 1-2 weeks before you travel.
- While outside of the United States: Drink bottled beverages, do not eat foods or drinks from street vendors, and do not drink local water or ice.
- Wash hands with soap and water after using the restroom; before, during, and after food preparation.
- Use treated water for washing, cooking, and drinking.
- Wash all produce before eating raw or cooking and do not eat uncooked shellfish.
- Eat foods that have been thoroughly cooked and that are still hot.
- Avoid raw vegetables and fruits that cannot be peeled. Lettuce is easily contaminated and very hard to wash well.
- When you eat raw fruit or vegetables that can be peeled, peel them yourself. (Wash your hands with soap first.) Do not eat the peelings.
- Persons with diarrhea and/or vomiting should not prepare food or provide health care for others and should limit direct contact with others as much as possible.
- Do not go swimming or use hot tubs if you have diarrhea and for at least 2 weeks after diarrhea stops.

All information presented is intended for public use. For more information, please refer to: http://www.cdc.gov/nczved/divisions/dfbmd/diseases/typhoid_fever/

Food and Drug Administration, Food Facts for Consumers:
<http://www.fda.gov/Food/ResourcesForYou/Consumers/ucm077286.htm>

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