



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 begin 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 complications.

How is typhoid fever spread?

Salmonella Typhi is passed in the stool and people become ill by ingesting stool from an infected person. This can happen when food or drinks 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. Transmission can also occur by touching contaminated items, such as soiled diapers or linens, and then touching your mouth.

Who is at risk for getting typhoid fever?

Anyone can become ill, but young children, senior adults, pregnant women, and immune suppressed individuals (such as patients 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 lasting more than 24 hours should consult a health care provider. The health care provider 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 recover completely. It is very important to complete the entire course of medication, even if you begin to feel better. Stopping your medication too soon may lead to antibiotic resistance and possible carrier state.

How is typhoid fever prevented?

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

- Get vaccinated. To work, the vaccination must be completed at least 1-2 weeks before you travel.
- When traveling outside of the United States, consume bottled drinks, do not eat or drink from street vendors, and do not consume local water or ice.
- Wash hands with soap and water after using the restroom and 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 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 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/typhoid-fever/index.html>.

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

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