

Typhoid Fever

1. What is typhoid fever?

Typhoid fever is different from Typhus. It is an illness caused by the bacteria (germs) *Salmonella typhi*. This germ may infect the intestines, blood or other parts of the body. Typhoid fever may cause death if it's not treated.

2. Who gets typhoid fever?

Although anyone can get typhoid fever, people who travel to other countries where the germ is more common are more likely to get typhoid fever. You may be at risk if you travel to parts of Asia, Africa and Latin America.

3. How is typhoid fever spread?

You can get typhoid fever if you put something in your mouth (object, food, or drink) that has been contaminated with the feces (poop) of an infected person. These (objects, foods, or drinks) typically get contaminated after they are handled by an infected person who has not washed their hands after using the bathroom.

In some foreign countries, drinking water or water used to rinse food may be contaminated.

People who recover from typhoid fever may still spread it, even if they no longer have symptoms, if they don't wash their hands well before preparing food.

4. What are the symptoms of typhoid fever?

Symptoms of typhoid fever can be similar to many other illnesses.

- High fever (103° – 104°F)
- Headache
- Stomach pain
- Weakness
- Diarrhea or constipation (very common)
- Loss of appetite and severe weight loss
- Rash with flat, rose-colored spots on people with pale skin

A doctor needs to test your blood, stool and/or urine to find out what illness you have.



Key Points

- Typhoid fever is an illness caused by bacteria.
- People can get typhoid fever when traveling abroad to countries where it's common.
- You can protect yourself from getting typhoid fever by getting immunized.
- When traveling to areas of risk, always remember to boil it, cook it, peel it, or forget it!

For more information:

California Department of Public Health

<https://www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/CID/DCDC/Pages/TyphoidFever.aspx>

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)

<https://www.cdc.gov/typhoid-fever/index.html>

Typhoid Fever

5. How is typhoid fever treated?

Typhoid fever is treated with antibiotics (medicine that kills bacteria) as prescribed by your doctor.

6. Should infected people be restricted or excluded from work?

Only infected people with diarrhea who cannot control their bowel movements need to be restricted or excluded. Examples include infants, children, and disabled persons. People who handle food or work in sensitive settings, like daycare centers, always need formal approval by their local health department before returning to work and may be excluded until they have completely cleared the infection.

7. What can be done to prevent the spread of typhoid fever?

If you are traveling to a country where the typhoid germ is common, get immunized against typhoid fever. See your doctor or clinic to discuss your risk. Also, avoid risky foods and drinks, like those sold by street vendors when you travel to a country where typhoid is common. When you travel, remember to:

- **Wash your hands** often with soap for at least 20 seconds, even if you've been immunized;
- Buy bottled water or boil tap water;
 - When boiling tap water, bring it to a boil for 1 minute before you drink it;
 - Drink bottled carbonated water, rather than just bottled water, if you can;
- Avoid ice and popsicles that were made with tap water;
- Eat foods that have been well cooked and that are still hot and steaming;
- Avoid raw vegetables and fruits that cannot be peeled;
- Peel fruits and vegetables yourself and don't eat the peelings.

If you are being treated for typhoid fever, wash your hands with soap and water after using the bathroom and don't prepare food for other people. This will lower the chance that you will spread the bacteria to others. After you have finished your treatment, have your doctor test your stool to be sure the bacteria are not in your body.