



Hawaii State Department of Health

Disease Investigation Branch

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Typhoid fever

What is typhoid fever?

Typhoid fever is an illness caused by *Salmonella* Typhi bacteria. Persons with typhoid fever carry the bacteria in their bloodstream and/or intestinal tract.

How do you get it?

People are the only source of this disease. You can get typhoid fever by eating or drinking food or water contaminated with *Salmonella* Typhi. These bacteria are shed in the stools and urine of infected people. Typhoid fever is a major problem in many developing countries where shellfish is taken from sewage-contaminated waters and where fruits and vegetables are fertilized with human waste. Flies can move the bacteria onto food, especially when garbage and feces are not disposed of properly.

What are the symptoms of typhoid fever?

Typical symptoms include sustained fever, headaches, diarrhea (uncommon) or constipation, fatigue, loss of appetite and rose-colored spots on the body. The symptoms can be mild or very severe.

When do the symptoms start?

The symptoms usually begin 3 days to over 60 days, usual range 8-14 days after infection with the bacteria. However, the beginning of illness depends on the size of the infecting dose and may vary widely among different people.

For how long is a person contagious?

An infected person can be contagious to others from several days to several years. About 2 to 5 percent of people who get typhoid fever go on to become long-term carriers of the bacteria.

What is the treatment for typhoid fever?

Medicines can be prescribed to treat typhoid fever.

Is there a vaccine for typhoid fever?

Yes. However, routine vaccination with typhoid fever vaccine is not recommended for the general population. Vaccination should be considered for

household members of known carriers and for persons traveling to, or living in, developing countries where typhoid fever is common.

Should persons with typhoid fever stay away from work or school?

Yes, persons ill with diarrhea should stay home from work or school. Ill persons and their close contacts who work in food handling, health care or child/ elderly care, must get permission from their doctor before returning to work. Infected people in other occupations who are not having diarrhea may return to work or school, but they must wash their hands often, especially after using the toilet.

How can you keep from getting it?

Wash your hands carefully after using the toilet and especially before preparing or eating food.

Do not eat **raw** shellfish (clams, oysters, mussels, crabs, etc.) gathered from areas where water is contaminated. Boil or thoroughly cook all shellfish.

Do not drink from any untreated water supply (streams, lakes, ponds, etc.). Boil or chemically treat drinking water if you are not sure it is safe.

When traveling internationally to areas where typhoid fever is common, get immunized.

Avoid high-risk food and drinks when traveling to the developing world:

- Raw vegetables and salads and fruits that cannot be peeled.
- Drinks with ice or ice cream.
- Be wary of food from street vendors.
- Avoid tap water. Drink water that is bottled.
- Choose foods that are thoroughly cooked and served hot.

For more information, see the CDC's website at

http://www.cdc.gov/ncidod/dbmd/diseaseinfo/typhoidfever_g.htm