

# TYPHOID FEVER FACT SHEET

## What is typhoid fever?

Typhoid fever is an illness caused by bacteria (*Salmonella Typhi*). It is a serious infection that can be life-threatening.

## Who can get typhoid fever?

Anyone. However, it is most common in persons who visit countries where the illness is common (most often in non-industrialized countries).

## What are the symptoms of typhoid fever?

Most people experience a sustained fever as high as 103°–104°F. You may also feel weak, or have stomach pains, headache, or loss of appetite. In some cases, a rash of flat, rose-colored spots develops.

## How soon do symptoms appear?

Symptoms typically appear within 6–30 days after becoming infected.

## How does typhoid fever spread?

The bacteria are passed in the stool of an infected person. You can get typhoid fever if you consume food or drink that has been contaminated by an infected person, or if sewage contaminated with the bacteria gets into the water you use for washing food or drinking. If you have typhoid fever, take the following steps to prevent spreading the infection to others:

- Keep taking prescribed medication for as long as it is recommended by your health care provider.
- Wash your hands frequently with soap and water, scrubbing your hands for at least 20 seconds
- Do not prepare or serve food for other people.
- Have your health care provider perform tests to ensure that no bacteria remain in your body.

## Is there a vaccine for typhoid fever?

Yes. If you are traveling to a country where typhoid fever is common, you should consider being vaccinated. Typhoid vaccines need to be completed at least 1–2 weeks

before you travel, so plan your visit to a health care provider or travel clinic in advance to discuss your vaccination options.

## How is typhoid fever treated?

Typhoid fever is treated with antibiotics.

## Should a person with typhoid fever stay home from school or work?

If you work at a job where you handle food, provide patient care, or care for small children, you should not go back to work until a health care provider has determined that you no longer carry any typhoid bacteria. Even if your symptoms go away, you may still be carrying the bacteria and could spread the infection to other people.

## How can people protect themselves against typhoid fever?

Although typhoid vaccines are recommended, they are not 100% effective. Therefore, you should be careful about what you eat and drink when you travel even if you have been vaccinated. You can protect yourself by doing the following:

- Only drink bottled, boiled, or chemically treated water and bottled or canned carbonated beverages.
- Only eat foods that are freshly cooked and served hot.
- Avoid ice, popsicles and flavored ices that may have been made with contaminated water.
- Cook food thoroughly.
- Avoid raw vegetables and fruits that cannot be peeled. Only eat fruits and vegetable you have peeled yourself.
- Avoid consuming food or drinks from street vendors.

## Where can I get more information?

Information about typhoid fever and other related health topics can be found at [www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov). The DC Department of Health promotes the health and safety of the District residents. For additional information, please visit [www.doh.dc.gov](http://www.doh.dc.gov) or call (202) 442-9371.