

TYPHOID FEVER FACTSHEET

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, have stomach pains, headache, diarrhea or constipation, cough, 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?

- Typhoid fever is spread commonly through the consumption of drinking water or food contaminated with the feces/ poop of people who have typhoid fever or paratyphoid fever or of people who are chronic carriers of the responsible bacteria.
- If you are being treated for typhoid fever or paratyphoid fever, these steps can lower the chance of passing the bacteria to someone else.
- Keep taking antibiotics for as long as the doctor has recommended.
- Wash your hands carefully with soap and water after using the bathroom.
- Do not prepare or serve food for other people.

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. However, resistant bacteria have developed the ability to defeat drugs designed to kill them. Your doctor may order special tests to see if the bacteria causing your infection are resistant. Results from those tests may affect what antibiotic treatment you receive.

How can a person protect themselves against typhoid fever?

Typhoid fever is [most common in parts of the world](#) where water and food may be unsafe and sanitation is poor. These places include parts of East and Southeast Asia, Africa, the Caribbean, and Central and South America. If you're traveling to places where typhoid and paratyphoid fever are common, you can take steps to protect yourself from infection.

1. [Get vaccinated](#) against typhoid fever. Visit your doctor or a travel clinic at least 2 weeks before traveling to discuss your options.
2. Practice safe eating and drinking habits. Carefully selecting what you eat and drink when you travel is important because typhoid fever vaccines do not work 100% of the time and there isn't a paratyphoid fever vaccine. Safe eating and drinking will also help protect you from other illnesses, including [travelers' diarrhea](#), [cholera](#), dysentery, and [hepatitis A](#).

Where can I get more information?

Information about shigellosis and other related health topics can be found at www.cdc.gov. The DC Department of Health promotes the health and safety of the District residents. For additional information, please visit <https://dchealth.dc.gov> or call (202) 442-9021.