

TYPHOID

What Typhoid?

Typhoid fever is a disease caused by a group of bacteria called *Salmonella typhi*. The bacteria are found worldwide, mostly in developing countries. They live in the intestines of infected people and are usually passed in the feces. The disease is not common in Canada.

What are the symptoms?

Symptoms usually appear within a week or two after a person has become infected with the bacteria. Some infected people may not have symptoms. Most persons have mild illness and symptoms may include fever, headache, weakness, loss of appetite, cough and rash. Diarrhea can occur, although constipation may be more common in adults.

How is Typhoid spread?

Bacteria are passed in the feces and urine of infected persons who are ill or who are carriers of the bacteria (a carrier has no symptoms of illness but continues to shed bacteria). The bacteria can be found in water and soil contaminated with sewage. Infected food handlers with poor personal hygiene and traces of feces on their hands may contaminate food, including raw food and food handled after cooking. Surfaces can also be contaminated.

The disease is also spread by close personal contact with an infected person, for example infants and young children with poor personal hygiene.

How is Typhoid diagnosed?

Diagnosis is based on assessment of clinical symptoms by a health care provider and laboratory testing of a stool sample.

Who is at risk of Typhoid infection?

Anyone exposed to the bacteria can become infected.

How can Typhoid be prevented?

Immunize. A vaccine for Typhoid is available. For additional information contact your health-care provider, including before travelling to countries where Typhoid fever occurs.

Use good environmental management. Flush or discard any stool in the toilet and clean surrounding area using hot water and detergent. A chlorine-based disinfectant is recommended.

Practice good personal hygiene. Wash hands thoroughly with soap and water after using the toilet or changing a diaper, after handling animals or contact with animal feces, and before preparing or eating food. Make sure children wash their hands

Take food safety precautions. Wash and/or peel all raw vegetables and fruits before eating. Thoroughly cook all meats. Prevent contact of cooked foods with raw meat. Drink and eat only pasteurized dairy products (milk, cheese, and yogurt).

Drink properly treated water. Avoid swallowing recreational waters from swimming pools. Do not drink untreated surface water from lakes or streams. Test private well drinking water regularly (once or twice per year).

How is Typhoid treated?

Persons with diarrhea should drink a lot of liquids to avoid dehydration, stay home when ill, and practice good personal hygiene like hand washing. Consult your health-care provider for advice and treatment if you have symptoms; prescription medicines may be used.

What is the Public Health response?

Health-care provider, hospitals and laboratories, schools and childcare centres are required to notify cases to Public Health. Public Health staff may investigate to find out how the infection occurred, identify other people who may be at risk of infection, provide advice as necessary, and implement control measures; including exclusion of infected workers in high risk occupations like persons involved in food handling, direct patient care, and care of the young (daycare) or the elderly (institutional settings).

Further Information

Please contact your health-care provider, local Public Health office or Tele-Care 811.