

## TYPHOID FEVER FACT SHEET

### **What is typhoid fever?**

Typhoid fever is an illness caused by an infection with the bacterium *Salmonella typhi*. It is primarily an intestinal infection, but in some cases, it can infect the bloodstream and is sometimes present in the urine. Typhoid fever can be a life threatening illness.

### **How do you get it?**

People are the only source of this disease. Typhoid fever is not found in animals. People become infected with the disease by swallowing water or foods that have been contaminated by people sick with the fever. Transmission of typhoid fever is rare within the United States. Those at greatest risk are international travelers visiting countries where typhoid fever is common (parts of Asia, Africa and Latin America).

### **What are the symptoms?**

A person infected with typhoid fever may or may not have symptoms. However, if symptoms are present they may include fever, headache, diarrhea, constipation, stomach pain, rash, weakness or loss of appetite.

### **How soon do infected people get sick?**

People with typhoid fever usually develop symptoms within 1 to 3 weeks after exposure. However, this period may be as short as 3 days or as long as 3 months.

### **What should I do if I think I have been exposed to typhoid fever?**

Antibiotic treatment is recommended for typhoid fever. People with typhoid fever will usually recover in 2 to 4 weeks with the appropriate treatment. If you are having symptoms of typhoid fever and you have recently traveled to countries where the disease is common, you should contact your doctor. People with this infection may need to be hospitalized to receive appropriate treatment. Occasionally people who recover from typhoid fever continue to be infectious to others. This is called a carrier state.

### **How can we prevent typhoid fever?**

A vaccine for typhoid fever is available and should be considered when traveling to countries where the disease is common. Vaccination may not be completely protective as travelers should also drink only boiled or carbonated bottle water and eat well cooked foods. An easy way to remember what foods are safe is “boil it, cook it, peel it or forget it.”

Hand washing and good hygiene are also important ways to prevent person to person transmission:

- wash hands before and after handling foods and after using the bathroom.
- never prepare foods for other people if you have diarrhea
- do not swim in pools or lakes if you have diarrhea
- people who have been diagnosed as typhoid carriers should never prepare food for other people.

**Where can I get more information on typhoid fever?**

[www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov)

[www.tdh.state.tx.us](http://www.tdh.state.tx.us)

**Source of information:**

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)