

IDRS Infectious Disease Reporting System

Disease Reporting 24 Hours a Day

Columbus Public Health and Franklin County Public Health

TYPHOID FEVER

Typhoid fever is a life-threatening illness caused by the bacterium *Salmonella typhi*. Most cases in the United States are acquired while traveling internationally. Typhoid fever is still common in the developing world.

Symptoms

Symptoms can begin within 3 to 60 days of exposure, but usually within 2 weeks. Early symptoms include:

- Fever with chills that gradually rises over several days
- Headache, dry cough
- General feeling of being unwell
- Constipation, bloating and stomach pain, lack of appetite

Later symptoms may include:

- Diarrhea that looks like pea soup
- Person becomes delirious has confused thinking
- In some cases, patients have a rash that looks like flat, rose-colored spots.

Transmission

- The bacteria lives inside infected people and leaves the body in the stool (poop). A few people who get typhoid may still carry and spread the bacteria for a long time after recovery.
- Sewage or flies may carry *S. typhi* to water or food sources. For this reason, Typhoid is more common in places that don't have public sewage and water treatment.
- You can get typhoid fever if you eat food or drink beverages that have been handled by a person who carries *S. typhi*, or that are prepared with contaminated food or water.

Treatment

- The only way to know for sure if an illness is typhoid fever is to have samples of stool or blood tested.
- Typhoid fever should be treated as soon as possible. Without antibiotics, 20% of people may die.

Prevention

- Wash your hands thoroughly after using the restroom, changing a diaper, and before eating or preparing food.
- Travelers: **"Boil it, cook it, peel it or forget it"**
 - When traveling in the developing world, drink bottled, treated, or boiled water and avoid ice.
 - Eat only hot, cooked foods. Avoid raw fruits and vegetables unless you can peel them yourself.
 - Avoid foods and beverages from street vendors.
 - If you are traveling to a country where typhoid is common, you should consider being vaccinated against typhoid. Visit a doctor or travel clinic at least one week before you travel.

Additional Information

A person who handles food at work or who is a child in a child care center must be excluded and can only return to work/daycare after they do not show signs of typhoid fever and have had three stool specimens that do not have the *S. Typhi* bacteria in them.

All information is general in nature and is not intended to be used as a substitute for appropriate professional advice.



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