



1. What is typhoid fever?

Typhoid fever is an infection caused by a bacteria (germ) that infects the intestines, blood or other parts of the body. Typhoid fever may cause death if it is not treated.

2. How do you get typhoid fever?

You can get typhoid fever by:

- Eating contaminated food
- Drinking contaminated water
- Handling infected pets and animals
- Being exposed to human stool through sexual contact

Anyone can get typhoid fever but it's more common where human or animal waste is not thrown away safely and it contaminates the water. Once the germs are eaten or drunk, they multiply and spread into the blood stream.

3. How do you know if you have typhoid fever?

The most common symptoms of typhoid fever are:

- High fever (103° – 104°F)
- Headache
- Stomach pain
- Weakness
- Diarrhea or constipation
- Loss of appetite and severe weight loss
- Rash with flat rose-colored spots

Symptoms of typhoid fever can be similar to other illnesses. A doctor needs to test your blood, stool and/or urine to find out what illness you have.

4. How is typhoid fever treated?

Antibiotic therapy is the only effective treatment for typhoid fever. Persons given antibiotics usually begin to feel better within two to three days. If infection is severe, hospitalization may be required. Women should tell their doctors if they are pregnant before receiving treatment. Patients, especially children and pregnant women, should drink extra fluids as long as the diarrhea lasts.

5. How can typhoid fever be prevented?

- If you are traveling to a country where the typhoid germ is common:
 - Get vaccinated against typhoid fever
 - Avoid risky foods and drinks, like those sold by street vendors
 - Drink bottled water
 - Avoid ice and popsicles that were made with tap water
 - Eat foods that have been well cooked
 - Avoid raw fruits and vegetables that can't be peeled
 - Peel fruits and vegetables yourself and do not eat the peelings
 - ***When traveling, always remember to boil it, cook it, peel it, or forget it!***
- To prevent spreading the infection, every member of the household should wash their hands with soap and clean water often, especially at these times:
 - Before eating or preparing food
 - After using the bathroom or changing diapers
 - After handling pets or animals
- Employees infected with typhoid fever and can't control their bowel movements (especially those who handle food or work in day care centers) should be restricted from work until a doctor can determine that they no longer carry the typhoid bacteria.

Sources

1. *Typhoid Fever*. L.A. Department of Public Health www.lapublichealth.org/acd/diseases.htm.
2. *Typhoid Fever*. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) www.cdc.gov/ncidod/
3. *Typhoid Fever*. New York State Department of Health www.health.state.ny.us/diseases/

For additional resources, please visit the L.A. County Department of Public Health website <http://publichealth.lacounty.gov> .