

What are typhoid and paratyphoid?

Typhoid fever is an illness caused by the bacterium *Salmonella enterica* serovar Typhi, which only infects humans. Paratyphoid is a similar illness caused by serovar Paratyphi A, B, or C. Both conditions are sometimes called enteric fever.

What are the symptoms?

People usually have a high fever with general aches and pains and stomach upset or constipation. Later they may feel sick, lose their appetite or have diarrhoea (loose watery stools). The incubation period (the time from first swallowing the bacteria to becoming ill) is usually 7 to 14 days, though can be up to 40 days. The illness may last several weeks.

Where do typhoid & paratyphoid come from?

Typhoid and paratyphoid mainly affect low income regions of the world where sanitation and clean water are lacking. The majority of typhoid occurs in Asia, Africa and Latin America.

How is it caught?

- Eating or drinking contaminated food or water
- Inadequate sanitation or living conditions

- Poor personal hygiene
- Close contact with other infected people

How can infection be prevented?

In countries where sanitation is poor it is advisable not to drink tap water or use it to clean teeth unless it has been treated. Ice should also be avoided.

Bottled carbonated drinks with an intact seal are usually safe, as are boiled water and hot drinks made with boiled water.

Certain foods are prone to contamination and should usually be avoided:

- Salads
- Uncooked fruits and vegetable, unless they have been washed in safe water and peeled by the traveller
- Food that has been allowed to stand at room temperature or exposed to flies
- Unpasteurised milk, cheese, ice cream and other dairy products
- Raw or undercooked shellfish
- Food from street traders unless fresh and hot

Vaccination is recommended for travellers to areas where sanitation and hygiene may be poor.

Hands should be washed after visiting the toilet, and always before preparing or eating food.

How should hands be washed?

Always use warm, running water and a mild, preferably liquid, soap. (It is not necessary to use soaps labelled as antiseptic or antibacterial.)

- Wet hands and apply a small amount of soap
- Rub hands together vigorously for 10-15 seconds
- Pay special attention to areas between fingers, finger tips, and palms.
- Rinse hands under warm running water
- Dry thoroughly on a clean dry towel.

How are infections treated?

Typhoid can be successfully treated with appropriate antibiotics. Extra fluids are important, especially for babies, children, pregnant women and the elderly. Clear fluids such as water and diluted fruit juices are recommended.

You will be visited by an officer from Environmental Health who will try to find out where the infection may have come from.

All persons with diarrhoea should remain off work or school until they have had no symptoms for 48 hours.

Some people in certain risk groups may be excluded from school or work until they are completely well and have also provided stool samples which have shown that they are clear of infection. The Health Protection Team will give you more information about this.

If someone in your household has typhoid or paratyphoid:

- The infected person should not prepare food.
- Soiled bedding and clothes should be washed on the hot cycle of your washing machine (as hot as fabric will withstand).
- Clean surfaces (toilet seats, flush handles, door handles and taps) at least daily with bleach diluted as per manufacturer's instructions.
- If cleaning up diarrhoea or vomit, wear rubber gloves; wash the surface with hot soapy water, rinse, and allow to dry. Use paper towels or disposable cloths. Dispose of used cloths immediately (e.g. in a carrier bag).
- The infected person should not share towels/flannels with anyone.

For further information see:
<http://www.fitfortravel.nhs.uk>

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***Information
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