



Typhoid Fever Fact Sheet

What is typhoid fever?

Typhoid fever is a life-threatening illness caused by the bacterium *Salmonella Typhi*. Several hundred people develop this disease in the United States each year with approximately 75% of cases acquired during travel to underdeveloped countries, including Asia, Africa and Latin America. Typhoid fever is uncommon in Oklahoma. Since 1990, 0 to 3 cases are reported in the state each year.

What are the symptoms of typhoid fever?

Typhoid fever may cause mild or severe symptoms. Persons with typhoid fever usually have a sustained fever as high as 103° to 104°F (39° to 40°C). Symptoms may also include:

- Weakness
- Headache
- Stomach pains
- Loss of appetite
- Constipation or diarrhea
- Rash of flat, rose-colored spots on the trunk of the body

How is typhoid fever spread?

Salmonella typhi lives only in humans; there are no animals that carry it. Persons with typhoid fever carry the bacteria in their bloodstream and intestinal tract while symptomatic. It is more common in areas of the world where water is more likely to be contaminated with sewage. You can get typhoid fever if you eat food or drink a beverage that has been contaminated with *Salmonella typhi*, including from those shedding the bacteria who have not washed their hands thoroughly after going to the bathroom or through contaminated sewage.

How long can an infected person carry typhoid fever?

The disease can be spread to others as long as the bacteria remain in the stool and urine, which may vary from days to years. Approximately 10% of untreated typhoid fever cases will continue to shed the bacteria in their feces for 3 months after experiencing symptoms; 2% to 5% become permanent carriers.

Do infected people need to be excluded from work or school?

If a person is employed as a food handler, works in a day care center, or has direct patient care duties, they must not work while they have diarrhea. Children with diarrhea should not attend a day care center or a school setting. People who are sick with typhoid fever will be given specific instructions by a public health nurse or epidemiologist about working with food, providing direct patient care, and working in/attending a day care center or school setting.

What is the treatment for typhoid fever?

Antibiotics may be prescribed by a doctor to treat typhoid fever. Once given antibiotics, persons usually begin to feel better within 48-72 hours. However, persons who do not get treatment may continue to have symptoms of illness for weeks or months. The fatality rate is less than 1% for those given timely treatment.

How can typhoid fever be prevented?

Food handlers infected with typhoid fever should never work while symptomatic and always use good handwashing techniques- especially after each use of the restroom.

Continued on next page...

For further information, contact the Oklahoma City-County Health Department:
(405) 425-4437

WELLNESS NOW



Typhoid Fever Fact Sheet

Travelers to countries where typhoid fever occurs should plan ahead with a travel clinic or their healthcare provider in order to receive their typhoid vaccination. Additional recommendations for those traveling to areas where typhoid fever has occurred include:

- Avoid raw vegetables and fruits that cannot be peeled. Leafy vegetables (like lettuce) are easily contaminated and are very difficult to thoroughly wash.
- When eating raw fruit and vegetables that can be peeled, you should peel them yourself after first washing your hands. Do not eat the peelings.
- Avoid foods or beverages from street vendors. Even when such food has been prepared safely, it is difficult for them to be kept at safe temperatures and away from contamination on the streets. This is a common method by which travelers get sick.
- Eat foods that have been thoroughly cooked and that are still hot and steaming.
- Drink beverages without ice unless you can verify that the ice was made from bottled or boiled water.
- Avoid popsicles and flavored ice made with water from an unknown source.
- Buy bottled water or bring water to a rolling boil for 1 minute before drinking it. When buying water, make sure that the seal is intact. Bottled carbonated water is safest.

Find out more information at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention site:
<https://www.cdc.gov/typhoid-fever/sources.html>

*For further information, contact the Oklahoma City-County Health Department:
(405) 425-4437*

Revised 12/2018

WELLNESS NOW