

Typhoid Fever

Identification

Typhoid fever is a bacterial disease that enters the bloodstream by eating or drinking contaminated food. Once in the blood, the *Salmonella typhi* bacterium multiplies and spreads throughout the body. After the bacteria have infected a person, the symptoms are a fever around 103 F, headache, malaise, nausea, and loss of appetite. *Salmonella typhi* bacteria are found in developing countries such as Africa, Asia, and Latin America.

Infectious Agents

Salmonella typhi bacterium

Occurrence

The disease is mostly spread throughout developing worlds such as Africa, Asia, and Latin America. The bacteria are an infectious agent that lives in humans. Usually typhoid fever is transferred by food or drinks contaminated with the *Salmonella typhi* bacteria. These foods and drinks become contaminated with the bacteria by a human who has the disease. Typhoid fever is mostly found in developing countries where hand washing and frequent bathing are rare.

Reservoir

Salmonella typhi lives only in humans.

Transmission

The disease can be spread by eating food or water contaminated with the *Salmonella typhi* bacteria

Incubation Period

8–14 days

Communicability

S. typhi bacteria stay in the human body even after symptoms are gone. The only way to rid it is to continue taking antibiotic until all bacteria are eliminated.

Susceptibility

Everyone is susceptible to obtaining typhoid fever, the possibility of acquiring

the fever dramatically increases when traveling to developing countries. The only way to protect oneself is to avoid risky foods and drinks such as non-bottled water and vendor food on the streets. There is an effective vaccine against typhoid fever, but watching what one eats is just as — if not more— important because vaccination does not guarantee protection from infection.

Methods of Control

Preventive measures include the following:

- 1) Get vaccinated before traveling to developing countries;
- 2) Avoid unfiltered water and unwashed foods, especially vegetables that that you eat the peel because they are hard to wash thoroughly
- 3) Avoid public restrooms facilities because the *S. typhi* bacteria can be transferred through stool;
- 4) Boil water for at least 1 minute.

Treatment

Typhoid fever is treated with an antibiotic. After the antibiotic is administered an infected person should be feeling better in 2–3 days.

Epidemic Control

The main epidemic control measure is treatment of the water supply. It is also helpful to bring in a new, safe water supply when an outbreak occurs. .