

# TYPHOID FEVER

## WHAT IS TYPHOID FEVER?

Typhoid fever is a disease that is caused by bacteria **Salmonella Typhi** common in many countries in the world. This illness should not be confused with Salmonella food **poisoning** caused by other members of salmonella group.

## WHO GETS TYPHOID FEVER?

Anyone can get typhoid fever but it occurs more often in people arriving from developing countries where the disease is common. **Vaccination** reduces the risk of infection.

## HOW IS TYPHOID FEVER SPREAD?

Most people get typhoid fever by eating or drinking food or water that has been contaminated by people with disease, including by those who do not have any symptoms. Raw fruits and vegetables, milk and shellfish are the types of food most often associated with this illness. **Person to person** spread can also occur.

## WHAT ARE THE SYMPTOMS OF TYPHOID FEVER?

Some people who are infected do not develop illness. Others may develop **fever, headache, weakness and loss of appetite**. Constipation or diarrhea may occur. Some people get « rose spots » on the trunk of the body. Symptoms may be mild, but typhoid fever can **be life-threatening** especially if untreated.

## HOW SOON AFTER EXPOSURE DO SYMPTOMS APPEAR?

The symptoms may appear from **three days to three months** after exposure with a usual range of 1-3 weeks.

## **HOW LONG CAN AN INFECTED PERSON SPREAD THIS DISEASE?**

The disease may be spread to others as long as the bacteria remain in the infected **person's stool**. Some people with typhoid fever may carry the bacteria for weeks to years. Carriers are persons who are not ill from the disease but may **spread it** to others

## **HOW IS TYPHOID FEVER DIAGNOSED?**

**Laboratory testing** of stool is the most common way to diagnose typhoid fever. The bacteria may also be identified in blood and other body fluids

## **DO INFECTED PEOPLE NEED TO BE EXCLUDED FROM WORK OR SCHOOL?**

Most people may return to work or school after they recover from the disease, as long as they carefully wash their hands after using the toilet. However, the health department needs to assess situations where someone with typhoid fever could spread the illness (e.g. : Food handler, healthcare worker, daycare worker or attendee) These people are not allowed to return to these settings until they have multiple negative tests for the bacteria and the health department approves their return to usual activities

## **WHAT IS THE TREATMENT FOR TYPHOID FEVER?**

Antibiotics and supportive care are used to treat typhoid fever

## **HOW CAN TYPHOID FEVER BE PREVENTED?**

Spread of typhoid fever can be prevented by **washing your hands** each toilet visit and before preparing /or eating food. People who live in the house or have other close contact with a person who has typhoid fever need to be tested for the disease. A vaccine is available that provides some protection for people travelling to areas where the disease is common. However, even if they are vaccinated, persons travelling still need to be careful

about what food and water are consumed: 'boil it, cook it, peel it or forget it'

