



Typhoid Fever

What is typhoid fever?

Typhoid fever is a potentially serious and life threatening disease caused by the bacteria *Salmonella typhi*.

How is typhoid fever transmitted?

Typhoid fever is most often spread through food and water contaminated by the feces of infected people who prepare food without properly washing their hands.

Where is the risk?

The risk of typhoid is highest in developing countries with poor sanitation, especially in southern Asia (India, Nepal, Pakistan and Bangladesh). Other areas of risk include East and Southeast Asia, Africa, the Caribbean, and Central and South America. The risk for travellers increases with duration of stay, for those visiting friends and relatives, for those visiting smaller villages and rural areas, and for those with adventurous eating habits.

What are the symptoms?

Symptoms can occur between 6-30 days after being infected. Symptoms include gradually increasing fatigue and fever, often accompanied by headache, malaise, lack of appetite, abdominal pain, diarrhea, constipation, and a rash of rose-coloured spots on the torso. If treated with antibiotics more than 99% of people will recover. If left untreated it can lead to serious bleeding in the intestines which can be life threatening.

How can I prevent typhoid fever?

Two types of vaccines are available to help prevent typhoid fever:

1. Oral vaccine (by mouth) – given as a series of 4 doses in capsule form and offers protection for 5 years.
2. Injection – a single dose that offers protection for 2 years.

Reactions to both vaccines are usually mild and temporary. Possible reactions to the oral vaccine may include abdominal discomfort, nausea, vomiting and rash. Reactions to the injection most often include redness, soreness, and tenderness at the injection site as well as fever and headache.

It is also important to follow strict food and water precautions and wash your hands frequently to prevent typhoid fever.

Talk to your travel health specialist about whether you should have the typhoid vaccine and to determine which vaccine is best for you.