



Typhoid

Typhoid fever is a life-threatening illness caused by the bacterium *Salmonella Typhi* and is still common in the developing world. Typhoid fever can be prevented and can usually be treated with antibiotics.

How is typhoid fever spread?

Salmonella Typhi lives only in humans. People with typhoid fever carry the bacteria in the bloodstream and intestinal tract. In addition, a small number of people called carriers recover from typhoid fever but continue to carry the bacteria. Both ill people and carriers shed *S. Typhi* in the faeces (stool).

You can get typhoid fever if you eat food or drink beverages that have been handled by a person who is shedding *S. Typhi* or if sewage contaminated with *S. Typhi* bacteria gets into the water you use for drinking or washing food. Therefore, typhoid fever is more common in areas of the world where hand-washing is less frequent and water is likely to be contaminated with sewage.

How can you avoid typhoid fever?

Two basic actions can protect you from typhoid fever:

1. Avoid risky foods and drinks – this will also help protect you from other illnesses, including travellers' diarrhoea, cholera and dysentery. Remember: "Boil it, cook it, peel it, or forget it!"
 - i. if you drink water, buy it bottled or bring it to a rolling boil for 1 minute before you drink it. Bottled carbonated water is safer than un-carbonated water.
 - ii. Ask for drinks without ice unless the ice is made from bottled or boiled water
 - iii. Eat foods that have been thoroughly cooked and that are still hot and steaming
 - iv. Avoid raw vegetables and fruits that cannot be peeled. Vegetables like lettuce are easily contaminated and are very hard to wash well
 - v. When you eat raw fruit or vegetables that can be peeled, peel them yourself (wash your hands with soap first). Do not eat the peelings.
 - vi. Avoid foods and beverages from street vendors.
2. If you are travelling to a country where typhoid is common, you should consider being vaccinated against typhoid. You will need to complete your vaccination at least 2 weeks before you travel so that the vaccine has time to take effect.