

TYPHOID FEVER FACT SHEET

Parents are kindly requested to keep their children out of school until blood test is clear, or tests on three stool samples taken at 48-hour intervals have shown that the bacteria are no longer present. Please bring results to the office before bringing your child back to school.

What is typhoid?

Typhoid fever is a bacterial disease. It is transmitted through the ingestion of food or drink contaminated by the stools (faeces) or urine of infected people.

What are the symptoms of typhoid?

Common symptoms of typhoid fever can include:

- High fever, which can reach up to 39-40°C (103-104°F)
- Headache
- Muscle aches
- Abdominal/stomach pain
- Feeling generally unwell with exhaustion, nausea and loss of appetite
- Constipation or diarrhoea (adults tend to get constipation and children tend to get diarrhoea)
- A rash made up of small pink spots.

Is it serious?

Complications caused by typhoid fever usually only occur in people who have not been treated with appropriate antibiotics, or who have had delayed treatment.

The two most common complications in untreated typhoid fever are internal bleeding in the digestive system and splitting (perforation) of a section of the digestive system or bowel, which spreads the infection to nearby tissue.

How does typhoid spread?

Typhoid fever is highly contagious. An infected person can pass the bacteria out of their body in their stools (faeces) or, less commonly, in their urine.

If someone else eats food or drinks water that has been contaminated with a small amount of infected faeces or urine, they can become infected with the bacteria and develop typhoid fever. The period of communicability can last a while, as the virus can remain present in stools.

Good hygiene, including proper hand washing, can help prevent the spread of the virus.

How is typhoid treated?

Typhoid fever treatment requires antibiotic medication and can usually be successfully treated at home, but hospital admission may be required if the condition is severe.

The self-care techniques listed below may help.

- Paracetamol and ibuprofen can be used to reduce a high temperature (fever) and treat any aches or pains.
- If your child's high temperature is causing them distress, you can also try to reduce it by keeping them cool. A cool (but not cold) compress, such as a damp flannel held to their forehead, can help.
- If your child has a high temperature, make sure they drink plenty of fluid because they may be at risk of dehydration. Keeping hydrated will also help reduce discomfort caused by coughing.

If your symptoms don't improve after five days, or suddenly worsen, contact a doctor for advice.