

Typhoid Fever

What is Typhoid fever?

Typhoid fever is a serious, sometimes life-threatening disease caused by one particular strain of bacteria called salmonella typhi. This bacteria thrives in all countries of the world where there is substandard sanitation.

What are the symptoms?

Early symptoms usually consist of chills, fever, headache, weakness, loss of appetite, abdominal pain, body aches, cough, and constipation. Children are more likely to suffer from diarrhea instead of constipation so neither should be considered part of a firm diagnosis. A rash may appear on the chest and abdomen. Diagnosis is by a lab test of blood or stool (sometimes both).

How is it spread?

Typhoid fever is contracted by consuming contaminated food or water or contact with an infected person.

Who is at risk?

The risk of Typhoid fever is greatest in Africa, Asia, and Central and South America but it is also a concern in some countries in Eastern Europe.

How can I protect myself?

1. **WASH YOUR HANDS!** Washing with soap and water after toileting and before preparing meals provides the best defense against typhoid fever and many other diseases.
2. **PAY CLOSE ATTENTION TO DIETARY SAFETY.** Avoid raw vegetables and salads, eat only foods that are well cooked and drink bottled, boiled, or treated water.
3. **GET VACCINATED.** There are several different vaccines available including:
 - a) Injectable vaccines (TYPHIM Vi and TYPHERIX). These vaccines are 70 percent effective¹ and provide protection for three years. They are not a substitute for careful selection of food and drink.

What are the possible side effects?

Side effects from either of these vaccines are usually mild and short-lasting but may include:

- soreness or some redness at the injection site,
- tiredness, mild headache, muscle aches, fever, and
- nausea, vomiting, and diarrhea may occur but are very rare.

¹ International Travel Health Guide 2006-07 Rose & Keystone

Who should not be vaccinated with these injectable vaccines?

- children under 2 years of age,
- anyone with a known allergy to any of the vaccine components,
- anyone with an acute illness or fever, and
- pregnant or breast feeding women unless the threat of the disease warrants.

b) Oral vaccine (VIVOTIF BERNA)

This oral vaccine contains a live attenuated strain of Salmonella typhi bacteria. It is packaged as four capsules (or three sachets) that must be taken as recommended to be effective and must be stored in a refrigerator until finished. The oral vaccine provides protection for seven years.

What are the possible side effects?

Although uncommon, side effects that have been reported are diarrhea, nausea, abdominal cramps, vomiting, skin rash, or itching.

Who should not be vaccinated with this oral vaccine?

- Children under 6 years of age
- Those with gastrointestinal illness or chronic inflammatory bowel disease
- Those with a compromised immune system or receiving chemotherapy
- Those with a sensitivity to any components of the vaccine
- Those who are pregnant, might be pregnant or are nursing
- Those needing to take the antimalarial Malarone within 10 days of the last vaccine dose

NOTE: No vaccine provides 100 percent protection against disease so other precautions to decrease the risk of exposure should be taken. Discuss these precautions with your public health professional or health-care provider.