



Information about Typhoid Fever Infections

Why Have You Been Given This Leaflet?

Your local council has a responsibility to investigate food poisoning and certain incidents of infectious disease. An officer from your local council's Environmental Health Department is contacting you to try and find out where your infection may have come from and to give advice on preventing further spread to others.

NHS Tayside Health Protection Team has notified your local Environmental Health Department that you or one of your household is suffering from typhoid fever infections. They are often the first to tell you what type of infection you have rather than your General Practitioner (GP).

The aim of this leaflet is to give you information and to answer some of the most frequently asked questions about typhoid fever infections. **Please take time to read this leaflet.**

What are typhoid fever infections?

Typhoid fever also known as enteric fever is a serious infection caused by bacteria (germs). It is caused by two types of *Salmonella* bacteria

- *Salmonella typhi*
- *Salmonella paratyphi* which causes a milder form of typhoid fever.

Where does it come from?

The bacteria can be found in the urine and faeces (stools) of people with the illness. It is rare in the UK and is usually acquired in developing countries where food and sanitation standards can be poor for example the Indian subcontinent, Africa, Central and South America.

How can you get a typhoid fever infection?

You can become infected in a number of ways

- Contact with other people who have the illness, **through inadequate hand washing** - after using the toilet, and/or before food handling
- Eating food or raw fruit and vegetables which may be unwashed or prepared using contaminated water
- Eating sea foods particularly shellfish which can be infected if they come from seas which have been contaminated by sewage
- Drinking unpasteurised milk and untreated water supplies
- Drinking or swimming in untreated water e.g. rivers, wells, springs or burns.

What are the usual symptoms?

The symptoms develop over a few weeks and are usually

- Headache
- Fever – a high temperature
- Nausea and loss of appetite
- Joint pain (sore limbs)
- Sweating
- Sore throat
- Generally feeling unwell
- Stomach pains
- A skin rash of flat rose coloured spots
- Constipation initially but in the second or third week diarrhoea usually starts

When do these symptoms start?

The symptoms usually start 1 to 3 weeks after swallowing the bacteria but can be as early as 3 days or as late as 8 weeks.

How long will the symptoms last?

The majority of people can clear the infection following treatment in 2 weeks. The illness can last for several months if you do not have treatment.

How do you treat a typhoid fever infection?

Early treatment is important to avoid serious illness. Antibiotic therapy is the recommended treatment. You should seek early medical assessment if abroad or consult your GP or NHS 24 in the UK.

It is important to drink fluids to replace the water lost through having diarrhoea and vomiting. This applies particularly for babies, children and the elderly.

If a young child has symptoms or if your symptoms continue or are particularly severe, consult your GP or seek medical advice from NHS 24.

Do I need to stay off nursery, school, work or other activities?

Yes, it is important to stay at home until your symptoms have been stopped for 2 days and you are fully recovered.

If you are an adult you should stay away from work and avoid visiting others. If you are a child it is important to stay away from school, nursery, playgroup or mother and toddler group and avoid visiting others.

You should tell your employer you have a typhoid infection if you work with vulnerable groups such as the elderly, the young, those in poor health or if you work as a food handler.

If any of your household are young children, work as a food handler, or provide care for or work with vulnerable groups they should stay off school or work until NHS Tayside Health Protection Team are sure they have not acquired the infection.

NHS Tayside Health Protection Team will contact and advise those who may be required to stay off nursery, school, work or other activities.

What should I do if I have symptoms again?

If your symptoms return or become more severe for example blood in diarrhoea, very high temperature, unable to drink you should see a GP or seek medical advice from NHS 24.

What should I do if I know of others with similar symptoms?

If a young child develops symptoms or if an adult has symptoms which are severe or last for more than 2 days they should consult their GP or seek medical advice from NHS 24.

They should, if possible, submit a stool sample via their GP.

You should tell the officer of the Environmental Health Department the details of the others you know to be ill. This information can help in identifying sources of infection.

How can you avoid getting or passing to other a typhoid fever infection?

Wash your hands thoroughly with soap and warm water

- Before preparing, handling or eating foods
- After handling raw food especially meat or poultry
- As soon as possible after working, feeding, grooming or playing with pets and other animals
- You should pay special attention to hygiene during farm visits, washing hands after any contact with animals, and eating only in designated areas
- After going to the toilet or changing a child's nappy
- By ensuring young children wash their hands.

Handle food and drink safely

- Thoroughly cook meat and poultry so that they are cooked all the way through, and no blood runs from them
- Thaw frozen food properly before cooking
- Always reheat food thoroughly
- Do not use the same knives, chopping boards and equipment for preparing raw foods and cooked or ready to eat foods
- Never put cooked food back on an unwashed plate previously used for uncooked meat
- Thoroughly clean knives, chopping boards and equipment used for preparing raw foods with hot water and detergent after each use
- Do not wash raw poultry because this will splash germs around
- Store cooked or ready to eat food in the fridge separately from raw meats. Raw foods should not be stored above or beside cooked or ready to eat food.
- Store uncooked meat on the bottom of the fridge to avoid dripping raw meat juices onto other food
- Wash all fruit, salads and vegetables that are to be eaten raw
- Do not drink untreated water or unpasteurised milk
- Do not use ice or drinking water in countries where the water supply might be unsafe
- Do not buy ready to eat foods from shops where you believe food hygiene standards are poor. Report such places to your local Environmental Health Department
- **Do not** prepare food for others until your diarrhoea and vomiting symptoms have been stopped for 48 hours.

Household Measures

Whilst you have symptoms you need to be scrupulously clean around your home.

- Make sure all members of your household wash their hands thoroughly with soap and hot water after going to the toilet and after handling soiled clothing or bedding
- Make sure that everyone has their own towel and that they do not use anybody else's
- Wash all soiled clothes, bedding and towels in the washing machine on the hottest cycle that the manufacturer would recommend
- Clean toilet seats, toilet bowls, flush handles, taps and wash hand basins after use with detergent and hot water, followed by a household disinfectant.

Water Safety:

- Do not use swimming pools (including hot tubs and paddling pools, etc.) if you have diarrhoea. You should wait until you have had no symptoms for 2 days
- Do not swim in water that may be contaminated
- Do not drink untreated water and avoid swallowing water when in lakes and swimming pools
- If your water supply is from a private water source please discuss this with the Environmental Health Department.

Travel Safety

Immunisation is recommended if you are travelling to countries where typhoid fever is common for example South Asia, the Middle East, Central and South America, and Africa especially if staying with or visiting the local population.

A single vaccination OR a course of three tablets is required to give protection against the infection for about three years and should ideally be commenced one month before departure. Your GP/Travel Clinic will be able to offer you this.

Where can you get further advice?

If you would like any further advice about typhoid infections or food hygiene, please contact your local Environmental Health Department. The local offices are listed below

Angus Council

Communities Department
Dewar House
12 Hill Terrace
Arbroath
DD11 1AH

Website: www.angus.gov.uk
Email: envhealth@angus.gov.uk



Tele: 01241 435600

Dundee City Council

Environmental Protection Division
Environment Department
3 City Square
Dundee
DD1 3BA

Website: www.dundee.gov.uk
Email: food.safety@dundee.gov.uk



Tele: 01382 433710

Perth & Kinross Council

Environmental and Consumer Services
Pullar House
35 Kinnoull Street
Perth
PH1 5GD

Website: www.pkc.gov.uk
Email: enquiries@pkc.gov.uk



Tele: 01738 476476

Other useful sources of information

The National Hand Washing Campaign

www.washyourhandsofthem.com

The Food Standards Agency

www.food.gov.uk

Travel and Immunisation Advice

www.fitfortravel.com

NHS 24

Tele: 111 - www.nhs24.com

NHS Tayside

Health Protection Team

Directorate of Public Health
Kings Cross
Cleington Road
Dundee
DD3 8EA

Website: www.taysidepublichealth.com



Tele: 01382 596976 or 596987

Further copies of this information are available or can be downloaded from the above NHS and local council. This information can be made available in Urdu, Chinese, Hindi, Arabic, large print, Braille or audio tape. Information in other languages and formats can be made available on request. Contact NHS Tayside Communications Department on 01382 424138.