

Patient instructions: Typhoid and paratyphoid fever – information for those who have been infected or exposed

Typhoid and paratyphoid fever are serious general infections caused by the *Salmonella* Typhi and the *Salmonella* Paratyphi bacteria.

The infections usually originate in tropical and subtropical areas with inadequate levels of hygiene. The risk of being infected is greatest on the Indian subcontinent. Sources of infection for typhoid and paratyphoid fever include contaminated water or food, but person-to-person transmission is also possible. The infectious dose is small.

What are the symptoms of typhoid and paratyphoid fever?

The symptoms of typhoid and paratyphoid fever are similar. The incubation period before the onset of symptoms is generally 7-14 days after infection, but it can vary between 3 and 60 days. Typical symptoms include fever, nausea, headache, muscular pain, abdominal pain, constipation or diarrhea, and a general deterioration of the general state of health of the afflicted person. Only some patients suffer abdominal pains. Some also develop a temporary rash.

How are typhoid and paratyphoid fevers diagnosed and treated?

Both diseases are diagnosed through laboratory analysis - usually involving blood samples (blood culture). The diseases are treated with antibiotics. Treatment is free of charge for the patient.

How can I avoid spreading typhoid and paratyphoid fever?

- Wash your hands with soap and water before cooking and eating, after using the toilet and changing a baby's nappy. Dry your hands thoroughly after washing. Keep your towel separate from those of other members of your household. Outside the home, use disposable towels to dry your hands.
- If possible, do not prepare food for others - even at home - until all the control samples come back negative: see the instruction below.
- At home, wash dishes, toilet facilities, and laundry normally. Wash clothes and bed linen soiled by feces at a minimum of 60° C.

Monitoring the patient

- Stool samples for monitoring the afflicted patient are taken. More detailed information is available from the communicable diseases unit of your wellbeing services county.
- The afflicted person must stay away from day care centres and high-risk work until three consecutive negative follow-up samples have been given. More detailed instructions are available from the communicable diseases unit of the wellbeing services county.
- Children using nappies must not be taken to a public pool or spa before their samples come back negative.

Definition of exposed persons and follow-up

- Stool samples are to be taken from persons living in the same household as the infected person, or who have regularly used the same toilet facilities as the infected person, and/or who have eaten food prepared by the infected person. More detailed information is available from the communicable diseases unit
- Routine vaccination of those who have been exposed is not recommended, owing to the lack of scientific evidence of the effectiveness of the vaccine against infection through person-to-person contact.

Further information

- Instructions on measures in cases of typhoid and paratyphoid fevers are available on the THL website <https://thl.fi/aiheet/infektiotaudit-ja-rokotukset/taudit-ja-torjunta/taudit-ja-taudinaiheuttajat-ao/salmonella/toimenpideohje-lavantauti-ja-pikkulavantautitapauksiin>