



Enteric fever (typhoid and paratyphoid)

This fact sheet can be made available in other languages or formats on request by contacting 0161 770 6666. For further information please see our detailed fact sheet Information for all.

What is enteric fever?

The term enteric fever refers to both typhoid and paratyphoid infections. Both are caused by salmonella bacteria (germs).

The illness caused can be systemic (involving many parts of the body) or may be mild and even difficult to recognise.

The illness often has a slow onset with sustained fever, headaches and lack of energy. Cases may in the early stages have a non productive (dry) cough. A delicate rose red rash may occur. Diarrhoea or constipation may be a feature.

The incubation period (time taken from swallowing the bacteria until illness starts) can be up to 1 month.

The infectious period (the period when the infection can be passed from person to person) can be a considerable time and antibiotic treatment should be undertaken.

Who can it affect?

Anyone, but the very young and the elderly are particularly vulnerable. Medication from the doctor is usually needed.

How is enteric fever caught?

The causative bacterium (germ) *salmonella typhi* and *salmonella paratyphi* only cause infections in humans (unlike the other salmonella which infect poultry and animals).

It is found world wide but the disease is more common in countries with less developed public health systems.

The bacteria are spread by food and/or water contaminated by faeces.

Do I need to stay off work or school?

You should stay away until you have been free from any symptoms for 48 hours.

Children should not play with other children or attend school until they are fully recovered and have been symptom free for this period of time.

Young children (pre-school and infants), and people in certain high-risk occupations such as food-handlers and health care workers, should **not** return until they have been given clearance to do so by the Environmental Health Officer. The Environmental Health Officer may require the affected child/person to provide specimens to ensure that the infection has completely cleared.

How can I avoid catching it?

By good personal hygiene. Always wash your hands thoroughly with soap and warm water and dry with a clean towel:

- after going to the toilet
- after changing a baby's nappy
- after contact with pets and animals
- before preparing and eating food

By only drinking and using bottled water (e.g. cleaning teeth) from a reputable source when visiting countries abroad, where mains water may not be available or of the highest standards.

By thoroughly cooking all foods and eating whilst still hot

By avoiding fruit or vegetables that have not been cooked or peeled when abroad

By avoiding cooked food being contaminated by raw food and dirty knives, etc.

What do I do if I or a member of my household has Enteric fever?

Make sure everybody washes their hands thoroughly with warm water and soap:

- after using or cleaning the toilet
- after looking after another person with diarrhoea / vomiting
- after changing a baby's nappy
- after handling or washing soiled clothes and bedding
- before eating or preparing food

Ensure each person affected has his or her own towel. You may need to supervise children to make sure they wash their hands properly.

Wash any soiled clothes, bedding and towels on a hot cycle of the washing machine. Keep soiled washing separate from the rest of the washing.

Clean toilet seats, flush handles and taps frequently with hot soapy water. The toilet bowl should be cleaned with a toilet brush and disinfectant. Make sure the disinfectant conforms to a British Standard and follow the instructions carefully, and keep it in a safe place away from children. Wear rubber gloves to clean the toilet and don't use the same pair for anything else.

Where possible, stay away from others (especially vulnerable people like the elderly and the very young) until your symptoms have stopped. Also, try to avoid preparing food for anyone while you have the symptoms.

Contacting us

If you would like more information you can contact us by:

Writing to

Food Safety Team, Chadderton Town Hall, Middleton Road, Chadderton, Oldham, OL9 6PP

Phoning

0161 770 4484

Faxing

0161 770 4500

Emailing

env.foodsafety@oldham.gov.uk

For information about food poisoning and related illnesses please see our other detailed fact sheets listed below:

- [Cryptosporidiosis](#)
- [Campylobacter](#)
- [Dysentery \(*Shigella*\)](#)
- [E.coli O157](#)
- [Farm visits](#)
- [Food poisoning](#)
- [Giardiasis](#)
- [Hand, foot and mouth disease](#)
- [Hepatitis A](#)
- [Infectious diseases](#)

- **Salmonella**
- **Staphylococcus aureus**
- **Viral gastroenteritis ('Noroviruses')**

You can also get information from the following:

www.hpa-nw.org.uk - includes infection control guidance for Care Homes, Nurseries and Schools, as well as information on topical matters such as avian flu.

www.hpa.org.uk - further details on infectious diseases.

www.food.gov.uk - good hygiene practices and food safety.

We value your comments and suggestions

We want to provide good quality service for people in Oldham and as we are a public service you have a say in what we do. We want you to be completely satisfied with our services but to ensure this we need to know what you think. What do we do best? Where could we improve things? Do you have any ideas or suggestions? Only by listening to you can we give you the service you deserve.

If you wish to make a comment about our services you can e-mail us on customer.feedback@oldham.gov.uk

or you can phone us on 0161 770 4191

or you can write to us:

Complaints Officer
Strategy and Resources Directorate
PO Box 160
Civic Centre
Oldham, OL1 1UG

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