

Typhoid Fever Protection



What You Need to Know

1. Why get vaccinated?

Typhoid fever is a serious, sometimes life-threatening infection. It is caused by the bacteria, *Salmonella typhi* and occurs in countries with poor sanitation systems. Travelers can become infected by eating food or water that is contaminated with the bacteria or by contact with local residents, such as family members, cooks or food servers, who are infected and unintentionally pass it on.

It is important for you to discuss any medical conditions you have and any medicines you are taking (even over-the-counter ones) with your doctor. He/she can decide if you are at an increased risk for typhoid fever.

Two typhoid fever vaccines are available. One is an oral vaccine that comes in capsule form. The other vaccine is administered as a shot, usually given in the arm.



The risk of typhoid fever is greatest in Africa, Asia and Central and South America, but is also of concern in various former Soviet Bloc countries in Eastern Europe.

2. Can I take either vaccine?

Both vaccines are recommended by the CDC. You and your doctor can decide which vaccine you take. Be sure to tell your doctor if you have had a typhoid fever vaccination before and if you had any reactions to it.

Oral Vaccine:

- Consists of 4 doses and should be completed at least 1 week before you travel. Protection lasts for 5 years.

- You should NOT take the oral vaccine if you have a fever, persistent diarrhea or vomiting or you are taking antibiotics. Do not take the oral vaccine if your immune system is weakened, either by disease or medicines such as anticancer drugs or steroids.
- Side effects that might occur are abdominal discomfort, nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, fever, rash or headache.

Injectable Vaccine:

- Is given as a single shot in the deltoid muscle of the arm. It should be given at least 2 weeks before you travel. Protection lasts for 2 years.
- Side effects that might occur are pain, swelling or redness at the injection site, headache or fever.
- You should not receive the injectable vaccine if you have a fever.

3. Can children take either vaccine?

Children can receive either vaccine, depending upon their age. Children greater than 6 years of age can take the oral vaccine. The injectable vaccine can be given to children 2 years and older.

4. How do I take the Oral Vaccine?

There are 4 doses to this vaccine. One (1) capsule is taken every other day on an empty stomach (i.e., 1 hour before eating). The capsule should be swallowed with cool or lukewarm water. Capsules should be stored in the refrigerator until they are taken.

5. Do I still have to be careful about what I eat & drink?

YES. It is still important for you to be “water-wise and food-wise”. An easy thing to keep in mind regarding food and water:

Boil it, cook it, peel it or forget it!

Your doctor or nurse can provide you with information, including a pamphlet “*Typhoid Fever: KNOW BEFORE YOU GO*” that contains useful information on the DOs and DON’Ts concerning food and water while traveling.

6. How can I learn more?

- Talk to your doctor or nurse. They can answer your questions and provide you with written information and pamphlets to take home with you.
- Call your local or state health department’s immunization program.
- Contact the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)
For English: 800-232-2522 or 888-232-3228
En Español: 800-232-0233
- On the Internet: www.cdc.gov/nip

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