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What is paratyphoid infection?

Paratyphoid infection is a serious contagious disease caused by the bacterium *Salmonella* Paratyphi. This illness is common in many parts of the world except in industrialized regions, such as the United States, Canada, Western Europe, Australia, and Japan. Most cases diagnosed in the United States are acquired during travel to other countries.

Who gets paratyphoid infection?

Anyone can get paratyphoid infection, but it occurs more often in people who travel to developing countries of Asia, Africa, South America and Central America where the disease is common.

How is paratyphoid infection spread?

Most people get paratyphoid infection by eating or drinking food or water that has been contaminated with feces (stool) or urine of people with the disease or by direct contact with a person who has the disease. Raw fruits and vegetables, milk, and shellfish are the types of foods most often associated with illness. In rare cases, domestic animals might carry or spread *Salmonella* Paratyphi.

What are the symptoms of paratyphoid infection?

The most common symptoms of paratyphoid infection include high fever, headaches, weakness, loss of appetite, and diarrhea or constipation. Some people get “rose-colored spots” on the front of the chest during the first week of illness. Symptoms of paratyphoid infection are similar to typhoid infection, but are typically milder. In some cases, paratyphoid infection can be life- threatening, especially if untreated. Some people who are infected do not show any symptoms of illness.

How soon after exposure do symptoms appear?

The symptoms usually appear from one to ten days after exposure. The incubation period is often shorter in children, and symptoms often appear suddenly, while in adults symptoms appear gradually.

How is paratyphoid infection diagnosed?

Laboratory testing of feces (stool) or blood is the most common way to diagnose paratyphoid infection. The bacteria are sometimes also identified in other body fluids.

What is the treatment for paratyphoid infection?

Antibiotics and supportive care are used to treat paratyphoid infection. If your healthcare provider prescribes antibiotics, it is important that you take the medicine exactly as instructed.

How can paratyphoid infection be prevented?

When traveling, particularly to areas where paratyphoid infection is common, it is important to practice safe food and water habits. These include eating food that has been fully cooked, drinking water (and ice) from a safe source, avoiding raw or undercooked food, and avoiding tap or well water (or ice made with tap or well water). For more information, see https://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/page/food-water-safety.

Spread of paratyphoid infection can also be prevented by careful hand washing after each toilet visit and before preparing, serving or eating food. Persons who live in the same house or have other close contact with a person who has paratyphoid infection need to be tested for the disease and cannot work in food handling until they have multiple negative tests.

No vaccine is available to prevent paratyphoid infection. The vaccine to prevent typhoid infection does not protect against paratyphoid infection.

How long can an infected person spread this disease?

The bacteria may be spread to others as long as the bacteria remain in an infected person's stool. Some people with paratyphoid infection can carry the bacteria for weeks to years.

Should an infected person be excluded from work or school?

Most people may return to work or school after they recover from the disease, as long as they carefully wash their hands after using the toilet. However, the health department needs to assess high-risk situations where someone with paratyphoid infection could spread the bacteria to others (e.g., infection in a foodhandler, healthcare worker, daycare worker or attendee). People who work in a high-risk setting or children who attend daycare are not allowed to return to these settings until they have multiple negative tests for the bacteria and the health department approves their return to usual activities.

How can I learn more about paratyphoid infection?

- If you have concerns about paratyphoid infection, contact your healthcare provider.
- Call your local health department. A directory of local health departments is located at the VDH Local Health Districts page.
- Visit the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention website at the CDC page on typhoid and paratyphoid.

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