

Typhoid outbreak in Auckland: Frequently asked questions

7 April 2017

Can I still attend church services this weekend in the Mt Roskill area?

There is no risk to people living, working or visiting the Mt Roskill area. They can go about their daily activities as normal.

Can I visit my family member/friend if they are one of the people affected? Would I be at risk?

Visiting one of the people affected and hugging/kissing them does not pose a significant risk. Typhoid is only spread by eating food or drinking water that is contaminated with faeces or urine from a person who has the illness, or who may be a carrier of the bacteria.

How do I keep my family safe from typhoid if I've been in contact with this church community?

If you've been in social contact with one of the cases, there is no significant risk to you and your fanau. However, if you are concerned please call Healthline on 0800 611 166.

In terms of hand hygiene, wash hands with soapy water for 20 seconds, then dry well with a clean cloth or paper towel every time:

- after going to the toilet
- before preparing food, eating or drinking
- after changing babies nappies.

Good hygiene and food safety is always important when sharing and handling food at social gatherings. If you visit the Auckland Regional Public Health website at www.arphs.govt.nz you will find information on food safety and hygiene plus resources for typhoid.

I have a family member who may be suffering from symptoms associated with typhoid. What do I do?

If any of your fanau are feeling very unwell or are concerned they may have typhoid, we encourage them to visit their family doctor as soon as possible, or contact Healthline for urgent advice on 0800 611 166.

My child attends Wesley Primary School and I'm concerned about their wellbeing. What are the risks if he goes to school?

We have been working closely with staff and the school community to ensure their safety and the safety of their student is of no risk due to this incident. The school is open as per usual. Your child will have been given information to bring home from school.

If I've been in contact with the people affected, do I have to do faecal testing?

We understand that doing faecal testing can be a daunting experience, but it is important for the health of your fanau. If you've been contacted by our team or advised by your family doctor to do a faecal test, our public health staff will take you through the testing process. It's important to be

tested and treated early to avoid any serious adverse health complications, as well as preventing further spreading of this illness.

We have a community event in the Mt Roskill area this weekend, should we postpone it?

Local events do not need to be postponed as this outbreak is isolated to a specific church congregation.

Can typhoid be transmitted through breastfeeding?

A breastfeeding mother, who has been diagnosed with typhoid fever, can continue to feed her baby. As usual, good hygiene when bathing the baby and changing nappies is important.

I'm travelling overseas to a country where typhoid is common, should I be concerned? What precautions should I take?

People travelling to countries where typhoid is prevalent should:

- drink bottled water
- not drink unsafe water, including ice and drinks mixed with water
- not eat from street stalls
- ensure hot food is well cooked and eaten while still hot
- see a travel doctor to discuss vaccination well before travel.

For helpful information for New Zealanders travelling to other countries visit www.safetravel.govt.nz

If you have family/friends visiting from overseas from a country where typhoid is prevalent and you're concerned that they may be a carrier, please advise them to visit their local doctor before travelling.

How far spread is the typhoid outbreak?

So far, all the cases linked to this outbreak are part of the Samoan Assembly of God church community who hold their services at Wesley Primary School in Mt Roskill.

Our first priority is working with the church community affected. This includes engaging with the people who have contracted typhoid, their fanau, and church leaders of this community, prioritising those people with the greatest risk of exposure to the bacteria.

I have concerns about the typhoid outbreak, who can I contact in the first instance?

If you have any concerns please contact your family doctor or call Healthline on 0800 611 166. Healthline has translation services available 24/7 if required.