

Water and Sanitation in the News

4 cases, but 'no typhoid outbreak'

The National Institute for Communicable Diseases (NICD) has assured the public there is no need to panic after one person died of typhoid fever, and three others were diagnosed with it. The cases were reportedly from Hillbrow, Yeoville and Edenvale. "There isn't an outbreak; there were four cases noted in Joburg over two weeks, which prompted an investigation," NICD deputy director Professor Lucille Blumberg told The Star on Sunday. "Three of the cases had travelled - they were imported typhoid. Only two of them had a link and they were siblings. "Based on that, there is not an outbreak because they have different sources," she said.

Dr Peter Vincent, medical adviser to the Netcare Travel Clinics, said it was likely the patients were contaminated in their home countries. Typhoid, he said, was highly contagious, but difficult to catch. "It is unlikely people living in places where there is running water and good sanitation will get infected. "People get typhoid from water or food that is contaminated with faecal matter. Therefore, it is important for those in poorer communities to ensure they drink only water which has been purified, such as tap water," he said.

However, the Gauteng Health Department said it had activated its Outbreak Response Team to trace and manage the cases. "We wish to assure the public that we are on the alert and we have sent environmental health practitioners to the residences of the affected patients to check whether there are other people who might have similar symptoms. "We have also taken samples from all sources of drinking water to determine the source of this disease," said MEC for Health in Gauteng Qedani Mahlangu.

According to the department, a 27-year-old Malawian woman died from the disease in Charlotte Maxeke Johannesburg Academic Hospital a week ago. The woman had returned from holiday three weeks ago, travelling through Mozambique. Then last Tuesday, a 16-year-old South African girl was admitted to the same hospital where she is undergoing treatment. She was stable and her condition was improving, Mabona said. She has never travelled out of Gauteng.

Two Zimbabwean girls, aged 3 and 11, were admitted to Edenvale District Hospital within days of each other and were also diagnosed with the fever. The 11-year-old girl has recovered and has been discharged from the hospital, Mabona said on Monday. The girls had returned from Zimbabwe on January 12.

Source: IOL News, 25 January 2016

WAMTech are specialists in implementing technology systems for improved governance, focussing on Water and Public Health Information Systems

Visit our websites:

www.wamsys.co.za
www.municipalassistant.co.za
www.ewisa.co.za

What is Typhoid Fever?

Typhoid fever is caused by a bacterial infection of the bacteria *Salmonella typhi*.

- The incubation period lasts for 1 to 3 weeks after infection and the infection symptoms can last up to 3 weeks, sometimes even longer.
- Symptoms appear gradually and start with a headache followed, by fever and abdominal pain, followed by constipation and diarrhoea, the former being more common during the early stages of the disease.
- In the latter stages of the disease, bronchitis develops, accompanied by a loss of appetite and subsequent weight loss.
- Typhoid fever, when untreated, can develop into intestinal perforation or haemorrhage, contributing to a death rate of 30%.
- Asymptomatic infections do occur.
- In some cases rose-spotted rash can appear on the body.

HOW CAN TYPHOID FEVER BE PREVENTED?

- Do not drink untreated water. Water can be disinfected by adding one teaspoon of domestic bleach to 20 litres of water and waiting for at least one hour before drinking. If no bleach is available, water can be boiled vigorously for at least 3 minutes. If the water is turbid or cloudy, add 2 to 3 teaspoons of bleach.
- Proper personal hygiene and sanitation should be maintained.
- Fruit and vegetables must be peeled or washed before eating.
- People who are chronic carriers of the disease should not be allowed to work with food or in day-care centres. They should be treated with antibiotics until 3 consecutive stool cultures are negative for *Salmonella typhi*.

To obtain more information on Typhoid Fever, other water-related diseases, as well as gaining access to loads of valuable guidelines and facts concerning water resources and water management – visit the [eWISA Fact Sheets page](#).

CONTACT US: Tel: +27 (0)21 887 7161