



# Indiana State Department of Health

## Epidemiology Resource Center

### Quick Facts

#### About...Typhus

##### What is typhus?

Typhus is the name given to a disease caused by the germ, *Rickettsia prowazekii* or *Rickettsia typhi*. These germs can infect both animals and people. Cases are rare in Indiana but have occurred.

##### How is typhus spread?

Typhus is spread by the bite of flea or tick. Fleas and ticks catch these germs from small mammals such as squirrels. The fleas and ticks then give the germ to humans by feeding on blood.

##### Who is at risk for typhus?

Anyone who works or plays outside or in buildings where there are fleas and ticks can catch typhus.

##### How do I know if I have typhus?

You cannot tell without seeing your doctor. Your doctor will give you an exam, ask you questions, and take blood for a lab test to see if you have typhus.

People with typhus first show signs 1-2 weeks after a flea or tick bite.

These signs may be:

- Fever,
- Bad headache,
- Body aches
- Rash

##### How can typhus be treated?

Typhus can be treated with medicine from your doctor.

## How is typhus be prevented?

Avoid flea and tick bites:

- Wear white or pale colored long pants with cuffs tucked into socks and long sleeves when walking in grassy or wooded areas. It is easier to spot ticks on light colored clothes.
- Put bug spray with DEET on clothes, socks, and shoes and skin. Stronger bug spray with Permethrin will keep ticks off clothes and shoes but should not be applied directly to skin.
- Check every 2 hours for ticks on clothes and skin.
- After coming inside from grassy or wooded areas, brush off clothes and body. Look for ticks all over your body; don't forget to check in the areas of the groin, back of neck and knees, and armpits. Take a shower and wash clothes at a high temperature.

All information presented is intended for public use. For more information, please refer to: <http://www.cdc.gov/other spotted fever/>

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