

# FLEA-BORNE TYPHUS FACT SHEET

## ■ WHAT IS TYPHUS?

Flea-borne typhus (also called murine typhus) is caused by the bacteria (*Rickettsia typhi*) and is transmitted by infected fleas, which enter the skin through scratching following a bite or on any cuts or scrapes. Infected fleas can be carried by rats, domestic or feral cats, dogs, raccoons and opossums.

## ■ WHO GETS FLEA-BORNE TYPHUS?

Typhus can affect people of all ages. Most infected patients do not recall a fleabite, but often have contact with animals such as pet dogs or cats that carry these fleas in or near their home. Pets and other animals do not become sick from typhus.

## ■ WHAT ARE SYMPTOMS OF TYPHUS?

Symptoms begin within 2 weeks after contact with infected fleas. Signs and symptoms may include:

- Fever
- Headache
- Chills
- Loss of appetite
- Nausea
- Vomiting
- Cough
- Muscle pain
- Rash

## ■ HOW DO I KNOW IF I HAVE TYPHUS?

See your healthcare provider if you develop symptoms of typhus after coming into contact with fleas. Your provider can do a blood test to look for typhus.

## ■ CAN TYPHUS BE TREATED?

Flea-borne typhus can be treated with antibiotics. The treatment is most effective when given soon after symptoms begin.

## ■ HOW CAN TYPHUS BE PREVENTED?

Make sure your cats and dogs are free of fleas.

Additional steps include:

- Do not leave pet food outdoors
- Avoid debris and overgrown vegetation that may harbor wild animals
- Do not provide food or water for wild animals, including feral cats
- Store trash in cans with secure lids
- Apply an EPA-registered insect repellent labeled for use against fleas when outdoors

## ■ WHERE CAN I LEARN MORE ABOUT FLEA-BORNE TYPHUS?

California Department of Public Health:

<https://www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/CID/DCDC/Pages/Typhus.aspx>

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention:

<https://www.cdc.gov/typhus/murine/index.html>



<http://patch.com/california/newportbeach/help-combat-flea-borne-typhus>

