

WA
900
AUS
957

The Prevention of Typhoid Fever

Issued by the Utah State Board of Health.

Typhoid fever is an infectious or communicable disease caused solely by a specific germ called the typhoid bacillus, which is passed from the body in the discharges from the bowels or bladder. Preventive measures begin with the disinfection of these discharges, and if properly carried out in all cases no other measures would be required; but unfortunately, for various reasons, this result is not attained. Some cases are of so mild a type as to escape discovery, the so-called walking typhoid being an example. Others have spread the infection in the early stages before a diagnosis has been made. A third class comprises a small percentage in which the germs continue to be present indefinitely in the discharges of a person having had the disease. These cases are called typhoid carriers. The cases, however, which are usually responsible, are the ordinary ones in which, through ignorance or indifference, the proper disinfection of discharges has been neglected. Every case of typhoid fever results from the failure to disinfect discharges from a former case.

HOW THE GERMS ENTER THE BODY.

The germs usually gain entrance to the body in water or food which has been contaminated. Water becomes contaminated through drainage into wells from infected privy vaults or from the surface of the ground where discharges have been deposited and washed into streams. A notable example of the latter occurred at Plymouth, Pa., where an epidemic of 1,500 cases was caused by drinking water from a stream on the banks of which the discharges from a case of the disease had

been deposited the previous season, and were washed into the stream by a spring thaw.

Contaminated milk and raw foods are very often responsible for the disease, the contamination usually occurring through the agency of house flies.

THE DEADLY FLY.

This deadly insect, now called the typhoid fly, having visited a privy vault which has been the receptacle of undisinfected discharges, may next be found in milk, raw vegetables, fruits, or other foods, carrying typhoid germs on its legs and in its body. A circular describing measures for the extermination of flies will be sent without charge on request to the State Board of Health.

One case of typhoid in the neighborhood of a dairy may be the source of an extensive epidemic, as is constantly being demonstrated; or an entire neighborhood may be endangered by a case in which there is neglect to disinfect discharges before depositing them in an open privy vault. In view of the foregoing facts the entire chain of preventive measures is obvious. If faithfully carried out the result would be the complete eradication of typhoid fever, the most easily preventable of all diseases, and the existence of which is a disgrace to any community.

DUTIES OF PHYSICIANS.

All cases of typhoid fever should be immediately reported by the physician in charge as required by law. In cases of sickness where typhoid is suspected but the diagnosis is in doubt, the physician should instruct the family to observe the same precautions as in an unmistakable case of the disease.

DUTIES OF HEALTH OFFICERS.

Upon notification, or when he shall otherwise have reason to suspect the existence of a case of typhoid, the health officer should immediately visit the premises and instruct the attendants in their duties. He should inspect and cause the disinfection of the privy vault; make careful investigation to dis-

cover the source of the disease, especially as to milk and water supply, conditions of surrounding premises, etc., and cause measures to be taken to prevent further cases from the same source; visit the premises frequently to satisfy himself that precautionary measures are faithfully and intelligently carried out, and strictly enforce the law requiring prompt notification by physicians. It should be the object of the health officer to surround every typhoid case with so complete a barrier of prevention that no germs may escape to endanger the lives of others.

DUTIES OF ATTENDANTS.

All discharges should be carefully disinfected in accordance with the rules of the State Board of Health as required by law. In the absence of a water closet, the disinfected discharges should be buried, or burned, or if deposited in a vault should be thoroughly covered with lime. Flies should be destroyed and excluded from the sick room; all soiled linen should be immediately placed in boiling water or antiseptic solution. Dishes used by the patient should be immersed in boiling water. The hands of attendants and patients should be frequently bathed in an antiseptic solution. Persons selling milk should not be permitted to leave milk bottles when delivering milk at premises occupied by a case of typhoid fever.

GENERAL REGULATIONS.

An ordinance should be enacted in every county and town requiring that all privy vaults shall be so constructed as to exclude flies, and that their contents shall be disinfected by covering with fresh lime at frequent intervals during the fly season. Properly constructed dry earth closets are recommended to replace privy vaults. Descriptions of model dry earth closets will be furnished by the State Board of Health on request. The vaults on the premises of dairies should receive especial attention, including frequent inspection by health officers. Their contents should be thoroughly protected from flies and constantly covered with lime. The accumula-

tion of manure and garbage, which is the chief breeding place for flies, should be prohibited by law and a constant warfare on flies should be maintained. A model ordinance will be furnished on request by the State Board of Health.

In localities where a pure water system can be secured, it should be installed without delay. In the meantime, where the use of well or ditch water is compelled, it should be boiled. Camping on streams supplying water for drinking purposes should be subject to regulations requiring proper disposal of excreta to prevent contamination of the water.

Privies should under no circumstances be maintained within 100 feet of a well.

Active and efficient health officers should be employed and properly remunerated for their services. No better investment of public funds can be made. Typhoid fever and other preventable diseases are an expensive and unnecessary tax upon a community without reference to the suffering and death involved.

DISINFECTANTS.

The following solutions are recommended for the disinfection of discharges, which should be received in a vessel containing a quart of the same, and allowed to remain at least an hour before emptying:

No. 1. Dissolve fresh chloride of lime of the best quality in the proportion of six ounces to the gallon; or

No. 2. Dissolve corrosive sublimate and muriate of ammonia in the proportion of two drachms (one-fourth ounce) of each to the gallon of water. Dissolve in a wooden or earthen vessel.

No. 3. Carbolic acid in the strength of six ounces to the gallon.

A copy of this circular will be sent without cost to any person on request to the State Board of Health. Health officers are requested to keep a supply of the circular and to place one in every home in which a case of typhoid fever exists.