Date: Wednesday 30 January 2013

TYPHOID ALERT – Call for Vigilance

From 1 October 2012 – 20 January 2013 there have been 16 confirmed cases of typhoid fever (Salmonella typhi) notified to the Auckland Regional Public Health Service. All but three cases have been linked to overseas travel, either within the Pacific or Asia. This is approximately double the number of cases expected during this period.

Clinicians within the Auckland region are asked to be vigilant for possible typhoid fever in people who have travelled to the Pacific or Asia in the last two months, or who have been in contact with others who have.

Typhoid fever is a systemic illness spread via the faecal-oral route. It is characterised by intermittent fever, headache, and malaise. Initially it may present with non-specific symptoms. Gastrointestinal symptoms may appear late in the illness and include abdominal pain (40%), constipation (38%), and diarrhoea (10%). If you suspect typhoid fever investigate with blood cultures and faecal specimens, even in the absence of diarrhoea.

Hospital admission is commonly required and treatment should be discussed with an infectious disease physician. Antibiotics are recommended for those who are systemically unwell or who have persistent fever, diarrhoea, for children in day care, or those in high risk occupations (food handlers, childcare and healthcare workers). Thorough hand washing and drying is essential to help contain the spread of typhoid fever within households.

All suspected cases should be notified to the Auckland Regional Public Health Service on 09 623 4600. The Auckland Regional Public Health Service is responsible for
investigating the source of the illness, contact tracing and exclusion of contacts from high risk settings, and taking steps to prevent further spread.

ENDS

For more information

- ARPHS Typhoid Factsheet and Hand Hygiene information:
- MFAT SafeTravel website – useful advice for intending travellers: