

දුරකථන) 0112669192 , 0112675011
தொலைபேசி) 0112698507 , 0112694033
Telephone) 0112675449 , 0112675280

ෆැක්ස්) 0112693866
பெக்ஸ்) 0112693869
Fax) 0112692913

විද්‍යුත් තැපෑල) postmaster@health.gov.lk
மின்னஞ்சல் முகவரி)
e-mail)

වෙබ් අඩවිය) www.health.gov.lk
இணையத்தளம்)
website)



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சுவசிரிபாய
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All PDHS,
All RDHS,
Director, NIHS,
CMOH, Colombo Municipal Council

Improve the food safety in and around the tourist zones and the Typhoid Vaccination Programme – 2025

Recently, the Ministry of Health received an official communication from another country under the International Health Regulation (IHR) provisions, that one of their citizens who travelled to Sri Lanka recently developed a food-borne disease. This is a very bad reflection of the country/tourism sector and can impact negatively in future. As the number of tourists visiting Sri Lanka is gradually increasing, it is very important to make sure the food that they consume is safe. This ranges from hotel food to street food.

Please make sure to increase the food safety activities in your district, especially in and around the tourist destinations. Frequent inspections of the food vendors, food sampling activities, health education, etc will help to increase food safety in your district.

Further, provide the Typhoid Vaccine to all selected food handler groups in your district according to the priority order defined by the Epidemiology Unit. This activity has to be coupled with a dedicated few hours programme for food handlers at the MOH office or a suitable venue. The following activities are expected to be carried out during this programme.

1. Registration of food handlers according to the PHI areas
2. Provide health education talk to the food handlers– suggested topics
 - a. Importance of good personal hygiene as a food handler Eg. Hand washing etc
 - b. Good food preparation and hygienic practices – selection of raw material and storage, cooking utensils, cooking time, covering the cooked food from mechanical vectors, waste disposal, clean water etc...
 - c. About the Typhoid disease and other food and water-borne diseases
 - d. The period of protection from the Typhoid Vaccine is 3 years. Every 3 years, they need to get re-vaccinated.
 - e. This vaccine only protects from Typhoid disease and not from Para-Typhoid or any other food and water-borne disease. Therefore, good hygienic practices are advised always.


- f. If it is a tourist destination, please emphasize the effect of food-borne disease and its impact on the country and the tourism sector by large.
3. Conduct a medical examination of the food handlers
 - a. General cleanliness/hygiene
 - b. Nail, hair
 - c. Skin rashes, wounds, plasters etc...
4. Provide the Typhoid Vaccine and the card (**Those who received the Typhoid Vaccine within the past 3 years, should not receive the vaccine at this time.**)
5. MOHs should send a weekly return to RE and RE also should send a weekly return to the Epidemiology Unit during the vaccination period (month of February) indicating the number vaccinated in each priority group.

The following table provides the priority order defined by the Epidemiology Unit. (The Typhoid Vaccine stocks are limited.)

Priority Order	Food handler group
1.	Food handlers in the canteen and the kitchen staff in <u>all</u> government hospitals
2.	Food handlers in the canteen and the kitchen staff in <u>all</u> private hospitals
3.	<u>Street food vendors</u> Eg. Ice cream, gram, pineapple, wade etc...
4.	Food handlers in the hotels at the long-distance bus stops
5.	<u>Food handlers in the hotels in the main towns where a large number of customers are being served</u>
6.	Food handlers in large-scale food establishments with multiple outlets
7.	Food handlers in the canteen and the kitchen staff of the education institutes (schools, universities, teacher training schools, nursing schools, vocational training centres, etc.)
8.	Food handlers in the food supply institutes Eg. Those who provide school mid-day meals, garment factories, etc.
9.	Any other institutes/groups selected by the district team with a valid justification.

For further instructions, contact the Epidemiology Unit.

Pay your fullest attention to make the food in your district safe for both Sri Lankans as well as tourist who visit our country.


 Dr. Asela Gunawardane
 DGHS

DR ASELA GUNAWARDENA
 Director General of Health Services
 Ministry of Health
 "Suwasiripaya"
 385, Rev. Baddegama Wimalawansa Thero Mawatha,
 Colombo 10.

Copy: DDG(PHS)1
 DDG E&OH & FS
 Director E&OH & FS
 RE-CCP, MO-Epidemiology – All districts
 F & D I – All districts
 SPHI-D – All districts