

FLEA-BORNE TYPHUS

What Californians Need to Know



What is flea-borne typhus?

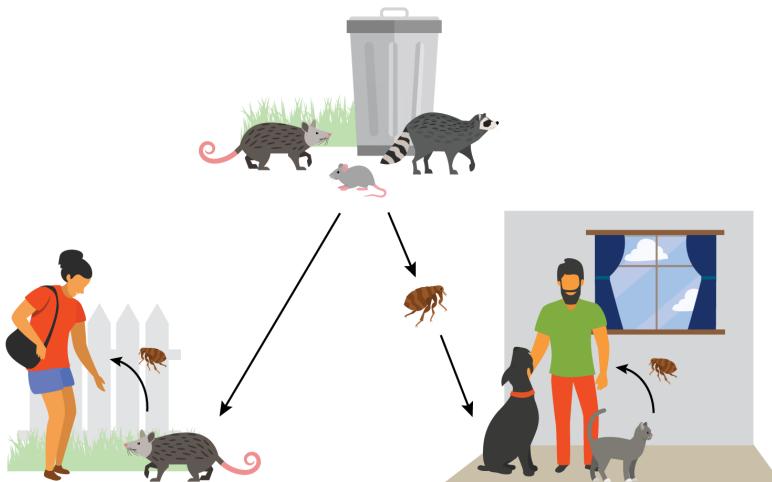
Flea-borne typhus is a bacterial disease that can spread from some animals to humans by fleas and make people sick. In California, typhus is considered endemic (always present) in Southern California, including Los Angeles and Orange counties, but cases are sometimes reported from other parts of California.



What animals can carry the bacteria that causes typhus?

Opossums, cats, and rodents (rats) can carry the bacteria that causes typhus. Fleas living on these animals can become infected and then spread the disease to humans.

Flea-borne Typhus Transmission



Who is at risk of getting flea-borne typhus?

People who touch, pet, or come in contact with rats, opossums, and stray cats in areas where typhus is present are at risk of getting typhus from infected fleas.

People living outdoors or in housing infested with rats or other rodents are also at risk of getting typhus from fleas.



What are the common symptoms of typhus?

Common symptoms include: fever, headache, chills, muscle aches, and rash on or around the chest, sides, and back.

If you have these symptoms, see your health care provider right away. Tell your health care provider if you have had contact with fleas or rodents.

Prevention

Avoid contact with fleas:

- Use flea control products on pets
- Keep pets indoors
- Do not leave pet food or trash outside that may attract animals
- Seal holes and openings in the home where rodents can enter
- Do not feed or try to touch stray cats or wild animals
- Keep trash cans covered at all times
- Trim and remove plants near the outside of the house
- Use insect repellent containing DEET when outside