# Imported typhoid cases in UK hit record high amid spread of drug-resistant strain from Pakistan



Imported cases of typhoid fever in the UK have reached unprecedented levels, with at least 702 cases reported in 2024. This figure, derived from data released by the UK Health Security Agency, represents an eight per cent increase compared to last year and marks the highest annual total recorded in modern history. The vast majority of these infections are attributed to travel to South Asian countries such as Pakistan, India, and Bangladesh, where inadequate sanitation and limited access to clean water exacerbate the situation.

Health officials from the UKHSA have highlighted the alarming implications of the rising number of cases, particularly emphasising the dangers posed by a drug-resistant variant of the disease now rampant in Pakistan. This extensively drug-resistant strain—known scientifically as XDR Salmonella Typhi—has made many traditional antibiotics ineffective, complicating treatment and increasing the risk of severe complications, including life-threatening internal bleeding and prolonged illness. While the agency did not disclose how many affected individuals have resulted in fatalities, the potential for a high mortality rate from untreated typhoid fever underscores the urgency of addressing this public health crisis.

Simultaneously, the health authorities in Pakistan have been confronted with a significant surge in typhoid cases, especially in regions such as Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, which reported over 10,000 incidents in 2024 alone, including numerous cases of the XDR variant. In response, local health officials have implemented new guidelines aimed at improving prevention, detection, and treatment strategies. These measures are crucial in mitigating the outbreak and curbing further transmission both domestically and abroad.

The rise of drug-resistant typhoid fever calls for urgent attention not just within Pakistan but globally, as cases have been documented in at least 16 other countries, fuelled by international travel. Reports indicate that individuals returning from Pakistan are increasingly carrying this resistant strain, prompting health agencies in the UK and beyond to issue warnings and recommend precautionary measures. The Centres for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has advised travellers to Pakistan to get vaccinated and adhere to stringent food and water safety precautions to protect themselves from this burgeoning health threat.

In light of these developments, the combined efforts of local governments, health organisations, and international health agencies are crucial in tackling the underlying issues of poor sanitation and accessibility to clean water, not only to control the current outbreaks but also to prevent future cases. As the global community confronts the challenges posed by antibiotic resistance, the response to the spread of typhoid fever may serve as a critical indicator of how effectively we can mitigate similar public health threats in the future.

### 📌 Reference Map:

* Paragraph 1 – [[1]](https://www.telegraph.co.uk/global-health/science-and-disease/cases-of-imported-typhoid-fever-reach-record-high-in-uk/), [[4]](https://www.thebureauinvestigates.com/stories/2024-09-24/drug-resistant-typhoid-is-spreading-across-pakistan/)
* Paragraph 2 – [[1]](https://www.telegraph.co.uk/global-health/science-and-disease/cases-of-imported-typhoid-fever-reach-record-high-in-uk/), [[2]](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/typhoid-and-paratyphoid-laboratory-confirmed-cases-in-england-wales-and-northern-ireland/enteric-fever-typhoid-and-paratyphoid-england-wales-and-northern-ireland-2023), [[3]](https://www.theguardian.com/global-development/2024/sep/24/drug-resistant-typhoid-disease-spreads-in-pakistan-antibiotics-superbugs-children)
* Paragraph 3 – [[5]](https://www.dawn.com/news/1849049), [[6]](https://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/notices/level1/xdr-typhoid-fever-pakistan)
* Paragraph 4 – [[3]](https://www.theguardian.com/global-development/2024/sep/24/drug-resistant-typhoid-disease-spreads-in-pakistan-antibiotics-superbugs-children), [[4]](https://www.thebureauinvestigates.com/stories/2024-09-24/drug-resistant-typhoid-is-spreading-across-pakistan/), [[7]](https://www.ecdc.europa.eu/en/news-events/increase-xdr-typhoid-fever-travellers-returning-pakistan)

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## Bibliography

1. <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/global-health/science-and-disease/cases-of-imported-typhoid-fever-reach-record-high-in-uk/> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/typhoid-and-paratyphoid-laboratory-confirmed-cases-in-england-wales-and-northern-ireland/enteric-fever-typhoid-and-paratyphoid-england-wales-and-northern-ireland-2023> - In 2023, the UK Health Security Agency reported 645 laboratory-confirmed cases of enteric fever, with 97% of these cases presumed to have been acquired abroad, primarily in South Asia. The majority of these cases were UK residents who had travelled to countries such as Pakistan, India, and Bangladesh, highlighting the significant risk of typhoid fever in these regions due to poor sanitation and limited access to clean water.
3. <https://www.theguardian.com/global-development/2024/sep/24/drug-resistant-typhoid-disease-spreads-in-pakistan-antibiotics-superbugs-children> - An article from The Guardian discusses the spread of drug-resistant typhoid fever in Pakistan, particularly affecting children. The extensively drug-resistant (XDR) strain of Salmonella Typhi has emerged, rendering many antibiotics ineffective and leading to prolonged illness and higher mortality rates. The article underscores the urgent need for improved sanitation and access to clean water to combat the disease's spread.
4. <https://www.thebureauinvestigates.com/stories/2024-09-24/drug-resistant-typhoid-is-spreading-across-pakistan/> - The Bureau of Investigative Journalism reports on the spread of extensively drug-resistant (XDR) typhoid fever in Pakistan. The article highlights the emergence of this 'superbug' strain in 2016, which is resistant to most antibiotics, leading to higher death rates. It also notes that cases have been reported in 16 other countries due to international travel from Pakistan, including the UK and the US.
5. <https://www.dawn.com/news/1849049> - Dawn News reports that Pakistan's health department has issued guidelines to hospitals for managing typhoid fever amid a significant rise in cases. The article highlights that Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province recorded over 10,000 typhoid cases in 2024, including 51 cases of extensively drug-resistant (XDR) typhoid. The guidelines emphasize prevention, early detection, and prompt treatment to control the outbreak.
6. <https://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/notices/level1/xdr-typhoid-fever-pakistan> - The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) provides a travel health notice regarding extensively drug-resistant (XDR) typhoid fever in Pakistan. The notice informs travelers that XDR typhoid fever strains do not respond to most antibiotics and have been reported worldwide, primarily among travelers returning from Pakistan. It advises travelers to get vaccinated and practice safe food and water precautions.
7. <https://www.ecdc.europa.eu/en/news-events/increase-xdr-typhoid-fever-travellers-returning-pakistan> - The European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC) reports an increase in cases of extensively drug-resistant (XDR) typhoid fever among travelers returning from Pakistan. The article notes that the XDR strain is resistant to multiple antibiotics, including first-line treatments, and has been detected in several countries, including the UK and the US. It emphasizes the need for vaccination and proper hygiene practices for travelers to Pakistan.