

Ugandan official: Typhoid sickens hundreds in capital

March 25 2015, byRodney Muhumuza

An outbreak of typhoid fever has infected hundreds of people in the Ugandan capital, Kampala, and looks likely to spread as the rainy season gets under way, a senior health official said on Wednesday.

At least 4,000 suspected cases of [typhoid fever](#) have been reported, 400 of which have been confirmed, said Dr. Anthony Mbonye, the director of health services at Uganda's Ministry of Health.

Mbonye said the disease's epicenter is a slum in downtown Kampala where many were sickened by contaminated water and fruit juices.

At least two people have died of typhoid, a [bacterial disease](#) that is transmitted through the ingestion of food or drink contaminated by the feces or urine of infected people, he said, warning that the current typhoid outbreak could spread following the start of what appears to be [torrential rains](#). Another risk is cholera, a bacterial disease that tends to break out amid intense rains in parts of Kampala, according to Mbonye.

"Expect anything now, even cholera," he said.

The World Health Organization says the majority of water sources that were tested in downtown Kampala were found "heavily contaminated" with fecal matter, and that most of those affected are men between the ages of 20 and 39.

"The majority of cases work in the business sector or as casual laborers,"

WHO said in a statement last week. "Food and juice vendors and cooks are also affected, hence the potential for wide spread of the disease."

The symptoms of typhoid fever include [high fever](#), headache, and constipation or diarrhea.

Typhoid fever can be treated with antibiotics, but Mbonye noted that, in a poor country like Uganda, the disease can become a public health burden if the sick are not quickly diagnosed and treated.

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