

1 dead, 14 sickened in New Zealand typhoid fever outbreak

April 4 2017, by Nick Perry

An outbreak of typhoid fever among a church community in New Zealand has caused one death and left at least 14 other people hospitalized, health authorities said Tuesday.

A person who traveled to the Pacific Islands recently apparently contracted the disease there then spread it to others in New Zealand, Health Minister Jonathan Coleman said.

Most of the cases began emerging last week, and Coleman said authorities don't believe the disease has been spread through water contamination.

"So it's person-to-person contact," Coleman said. "It's a congregation sharing food together, being in close contact."

Health authorities said all those infected are members of the Samoan Assembly of God, a Pacific church in Auckland. The congregants live in several different suburbs across central and south Auckland.

The woman who died last week had other serious health issues and that [typhoid fever](#) was a complicating factor, Dr. Julia Peters, the clinical director of the Auckland Regional Public Health Service, said in a statement.

"We are working with the church to trace other people who may be infected and we are doing this while they are mourning the loss of one of

their own," Peters said.

Coleman said authorities have screened 140 people for the disease and have another 60 to screen. He said he didn't believe the outbreak posed a wider risk to the public beyond those who had been in direct contact with the church congregation.

The disease can be contracted by eating food or [drinking water](#) handled by somebody who has the disease, or when contaminated sewage comes into contact with drinking water.

Symptoms include a [high fever](#), headaches and muscle aches, and constipation or diarrhea. The disease can usually be treated with antibiotics.

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