The risk of typhoid may be increasing in Sierra Leone. Global data show that multidrug-resistant (MDR) typhoid prevalence has increased dramatically since 1992.

While drug-resistant typhoid has not been isolated in Sierra Leone, it has been found in other West African countries, including Ghana.

Diseases such as typhoid can easily cross borders, and as drug-resistant typhoid becomes more common, it has the potential to spread to Sierra Leone. Drug-resistant typhoid is more difficult to treat and forces the use of more expensive and less readily-available treatment options.

More than a third of the population does not have access to basic drinking water services, and more than 80% lack access to basic sanitation services. This drastically increases typhoid risks.

Sierra Leone is a typhoid-endemic country. The Global Burden of Disease 2019 study estimated that Sierra Leone experienced at least:

- 10,039 typhoid cases (121 cases per 100,000)
- 175 typhoid deaths
- 13,734 disability-adjusted life-years lost to typhoid

While typhoid is rarely fatal, the recovery is long and difficult. The disease steals time, money, and productivity from those infected and their families and is associated with numerous long-term complications.

Most typhoid cases in Sierra Leone occur in children younger than 15 years old. 

Diseases such as typhoid can easily cross borders, and as drug-resistant typhoid becomes more common, it has the potential to spread to Sierra Leone. Drug-resistant typhoid is more difficult to treat and forces the use of more expensive and less readily-available treatment options.
Typhoid conjugate vaccines (TCVs) in Sierra Leone

The World Health Organization (WHO) recommends the introduction of prequalified TCVs be prioritized in countries with a high burden of typhoid disease or a high burden of drug-resistant typhoid. Support for introduction from Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance is available now. TCVs:

- Are highly effective and safe for children as young as 6 months of age;
- Require a single dose to prevent 79-85% of typhoid cases in children;⁶
- Offer strong protection for at least 4 years; and
- Can be co-administered with measles-rubella and yellow fever vaccines.⁷,⁸

Findings from an economic analysis predict that, even in the absence of a Gavi subsidy, a catch-up campaign with TCV could be cost-effective in Sierra Leone.⁷

Let's Take on Typhoid in Sierra Leone

- Typhoid is endemic in Sierra Leone, with more than 10,000 cases per year.
- Sierra Leone's burden of typhoid is most heavily borne by children younger than 15 years of age.
- Data show a global increase in drug-resistant typhoid, which could spread to Sierra Leone.
- TCVs are safe, effective, and WHO-recommended for routine immunization as part of a cost-effective, integrated approach to typhoid prevention and control alongside safe water, sanitation, and hygiene interventions.
- Gavi support for TCV introduction is available now.