



Cyclosporiasis

What is Cyclosporiasis?

Cyclosporiasis is an illness caused by the parasite *Cyclospora cayetanensis*. People can become infected with *Cyclospora* by eating food or drinking water with the parasite in it.

How is Cyclospora spread?

The *Cyclospora* parasite is found in the stool of infected persons and is spread when another person eats something, such as food or water, which came in contact with the infectious stool.

The *Cyclospora* parasite is not able to cause illness in another person right away, but rather needs time (days or weeks) to develop and become infectious. Therefore, it is unlikely that *Cyclospora* is spread directly from one person to another.

Once the parasite develops in the environment, it may find its way into drinking water, recreational water (e.g. lakes, rivers) or food and then cause human illness.

Outbreaks of illness caused by *Cyclospora* in North America have been linked to eating fresh fruits and vegetables imported from developing countries that may have been in contact with human stool. Some examples include raspberries, basil and lettuce.

What symptoms should I watch for?

Most people have many rounds of watery diarrhea, stomach cramps, vomiting, nausea, loss of appetite, and sometimes fever.

Symptoms generally begin one week after you come in contact with the parasite. Some people who are infected with *Cyclospora* have no symptoms at all. If left untreated, this illness can last for a few days to a month or longer, and may return one or more times.

What is the treatment for Cyclosporiasis?

Talk to your health care provider to discuss treatment options.

How do I protect myself and others?

It is important to wash fruits and vegetables, using treated water (e.g. municipal water, bottled water) as thoroughly as possible before eating them.

Do not drink untreated surface water from a spring, stream, river, lake, pond or shallow well.

When traveling to a developing country make sure that you drink bottled water, or boil untreated surface water that is used in drinks, making ice cubes, washing uncooked fruits and vegetables, making baby formula, brushing teeth and washing dentures or contact lenses.

Is there anything special I need to know?

If you have Cyclosporiasis and you care for others, particularly seniors or children, you should not go to work while you are having symptoms. It is advised to make sure you have no symptoms for at least 24 hours before you return to work.

It is possible that even after you are feeling better you will still have the parasite in your stool for a period of time. To prevent spreading the disease to people around you, always practice good hand hygiene and stay home when you are ill.

For information call Infectious Diseases: ext. 8809