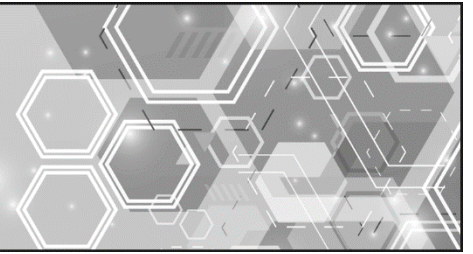




Durham Region Health Department **Facts about...**



Cyclosporiasis

What is it?

Cyclosporiasis is a stomach illness that usually causes with diarrhea. The illness is caused by the ingestion of a microscopic parasite called *Cyclospora cayetanensis*. Infected people may have the parasite in their stool, and the parasite may survive in the environment.

This parasite is uncommon in Canada. People who become infected have usually travelled to areas where the parasite is found or eaten imported foods from those regions. Cyclosporiasis is a reportable disease in Ontario. Health care providers and laboratories are required to report cases to the Health Department.

How is it spread?

The *Cyclospora* parasite does not naturally occur in food. Fresh fruits, vegetables, or any other foods can become contaminated before they reach consumers if they are exposed to contaminated water or handled by an infected person during the growing, picking, packaging or transportation stages.

Most of the *Cyclospora* outbreaks in the United States and Canada have been associated with consumption of imported fresh produce (i.e., fresh fruits and vegetables) such as basil, cilantro, raspberries, blackberries, lettuce, snow and snap peas, and pre-packaged salad mixes.

Cyclospora is unlikely to be passed from person to person, because the parasite requires time in the environment before it becomes infectious.

What do I look for?

After ingestion of the parasite in contaminated food or water, it may take between 2-14 days for you to become ill, usually about 7 days.

Common symptoms are watery diarrhea, loss of appetite, weight loss, abdominal bloating and cramping, increased gas, nausea, fatigue, and low-grade fever.

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If you require this information in an accessible format, contact 1-800-841-2729.



How is it treated?

Cyclosporiasis may be treated with antibiotics; please see a health care provider for treatment advice.

How can I protect myself?

- Wash hands with soap and water after using the bathroom, after changing diapers, handling animals or pet food, and before preparing meals or eating meals.
- Do not prepare or serve food if you are experiencing diarrhea. Consider temporarily reassigning food-handling duties.
- Thoroughly wash fresh fruits and vegetables before eating, handling, or preparing them. Cook produce when appropriate, ensure foods are fully cooked or baked, and take steps to prevent cross contamination when handling and preparing food.
- Cook raw foods according to instructions and refrigerate foods (including leftover cooked foods) as soon as possible.
- Travellers, especially to developing countries, should avoid any fruits and vegetables that cannot be peeled or cooked and should drink water from a safe (treated or boiled) source.

More information can be obtained from

[Cyclosporiasis \(Cyclospora\) - Health Canada](#)

[Clinical Overview of cyclosporiasis - CDC](#)

Contact the Durham Health Connection Line at 905-668-2020 or 1-800-841-2729 to speak with a Public Health Inspector

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