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What is cyclosporiasis?

Cyclosporiasis is an infection of the intestine caused by a parasite called *Cyclospora* (SIGH-clo-SPORE-uh). The first known human cases of cyclosporiasis were reported in 1979.

Who gets cyclosporiasis?

Anyone can get cyclosporiasis. The infection can occur in many countries, including the United States, but it is more common in tropical areas. The majority of cases and outbreaks are reported during the spring and summer months, although infections can occur year-round. People who have been infected with *Cyclospora* can become infected again.

How is cyclosporiasis spread?

Cyclosporiasis is not spread directly from person-to-person. Infected people pass *Cyclospora* in their feces (stool), but this form of the parasite cannot make people sick. The parasite needs time (days to weeks) in the environment to change into a form that can make people sick. This form of the parasite then can infect someone by entering the body through the mouth, typically by eating or drinking something that is contaminated with *Cyclospora*. Outbreaks of cyclosporiasis in the United States have been linked to imported fresh produce, such as raspberries, basil, lettuce, and snow peas. The produce involved in each outbreak was probably contaminated in the country where it was grown.

What are the symptoms of cyclosporiasis?

Cyclospora infect the small intestine (bowel) and usually cause watery diarrhea with frequent, sometimes explosive, bowel movements. Other symptoms can include loss of appetite, weight loss, bloating, increased gas, stomach cramps, nausea, vomiting, muscle aches, low-grade fever, and fatigue. Some people who are infected with *Cyclospora* do not have any symptoms.

How soon after exposure do symptoms appear?

Symptoms usually appear within one week after exposure. If not treated, the illness can last from a few days to a month, or longer. Symptoms might seem to go away and then return one or more times (relapse).

How is cyclosporiasis diagnosed?

Diagnosis involves identifying this parasite in stool through special laboratory tests requested by a healthcare provider. Because cyclosporiasis can be difficult to diagnose, patients might be asked to submit several stool specimens over several days. Healthcare providers might also request laboratory testing to check for other organisms that can cause similar symptoms.

What is the treatment for cyclosporiasis?

People who have diarrhea should rest and drink plenty of fluids. Specific antibiotics are sometimes prescribed. Options for treatment should be discussed with a healthcare provider.

How can cyclosporiasis be prevented?

- Farmers should follow good practices for growing, harvesting, and packing fresh fruits and vegetables.
- Fresh produce should always be washed.
- Travelers, especially to tropical areas, should avoid eating raw or undercooked foods or drinking untreated water that could be contaminated with feces.
- Proper sanitation to prevent human waste from contaminating the environment is important.

How can I get more information about cyclosporiasis?

- If you have concerns about cyclosporiasis, contact your healthcare provider.
- Call your local health department. A directory of local health departments is located at the [VDH Local Health Districts page](#).
- Visit the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention website at [the CDC's page on cyclosporiasis](#).

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