
REDUCE YOUR RISK OF FOODBORNE ILLNESS THIS SUMMER



In the US, outbreaks of cyclosporiasis have been linked to the consumption of various types of imported fresh produce including berries, peas, lettuce, and cilantro.

Cyclosporiasis

Summer is a time many of us enjoy eating a variety of seasonal fresh produce. Unfortunately, summer is also the time when most outbreaks of cyclosporiasis occur. An outbreak occurs when two or more people get sick from consuming the same contaminated food or drink.

Outbreaks associated with imported produce occur nearly every year in the United States. Health departments, the FDA, and the CDC investigate foodborne outbreaks to find the contaminated product and prevent others from becoming sick.

What is Cyclosporiasis?

Cyclosporiasis is an intestinal illness caused by the microscopic parasite *Cyclospora cayetanensis*. A person who consumes food or drinks contaminated with feces that contains the parasite may become sick. Not everyone who becomes infected develops symptoms. For most people, symptoms begin about a week after ingesting the contaminated product.

Symptoms of cyclosporiasis include:

- watery diarrhea
- loss of appetite, often with weight loss
- abdominal cramps and bloating
- nausea

- fatigue
- fever
- headache
- flu-like symptoms

Left untreated, symptoms can last weeks or more. Your healthcare provider can do specific stool tests to determine if you have been infected with the parasite and treat you with an appropriate antibiotic.

Cyclosporiasis is found in many countries and is commonly found in tropical and subtropical regions. Produce from countries where cyclospora is endemic could be contaminated. People who live in or travel to these regions may be at increased risk.

How Can You Prevent Getting Cyclosporiasis?

There are steps you can take to reduce your risk of infection:

- Avoid food or water that could be contaminated with human stool (produce grown, packed, transported, or prepared in unsanitary conditions)
- Wash hands with warm water and soap before and after handling and preparing fresh fruits and vegetables
- Wash all fresh fruits and vegetables thoroughly under running water before consuming, cutting, or cooking

For more information on cyclosporiasis, visit

<https://www.dshs.texas.gov/IDCU/disease/Cyclospora.aspx>

<https://www.cdc.gov/parasites/cyclosporiasis/index.html>