

Cyclospora INFECTION

What is Cyclospora?

Cyclospora cayetanensis is a microscopic parasite (it cannot be seen without a microscope) that causes an intestinal illness known as cyclosporiasis.

People become infected by consuming food or water that is contaminated with parasites. Unlike many bacteria, *Cyclospora* does not spread directly from one person to another because the parasite must age in the environment before it becomes infectious.

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Current Situation

Foodborne outbreaks of *Cyclospora* occur each year, especially during the spring and summer months when consumption of fresh produce increases. Public health agencies continue to investigate outbreaks and trace contaminated food products to help prevent additional illnesses.

Symptoms

Symptoms usually begin about **2–14 days** after consuming infected food and may include:

- Frequent, watery diarrhea
- Loss of appetite
- Weight loss
- Stomach cramps and bloating
- Nausea and vomiting
- Fatigue
- Low-grade fever
- Muscle aches

**Without treatment, symptoms may last for several weeks or even recur over time.*



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Foods Commonly Associated with Cyclospora

Fresh produce has most commonly been linked to outbreaks, including:

- Bagged salads
- Romaine lettuce
- Fresh basil
- Cilantro
- Parsley
- Green onions
- Raspberries
- Blackberries
- Snow peas
- Fresh vegetables and herbs imported from areas where the parasite is more common.

**Because the parasite is tough to many common disinfectants, simply rinsing produce may not destroy the risk.*



How to Reduce Risk

Follow these food safety practices:



Wash hands thoroughly and properly for at least 20 seconds with soap and water before handling food.



Rinse fresh fruits and vegetables under clean running water before eating or preparing them.



Remove damaged or bruised portions of produce.



Refrigerate fresh produce promptly.



Keep raw foods separate from ready-to-eat foods.



Follow food recall notices issued by public health agencies.



Purchase produce from reputable suppliers.



When dining out, be aware of food recalls and advisories.

When to Go to the Doctor

Seek medical attention if experiencing:

- Diarrhea lasting more than three days
- Severe dehydration
- Bloody diarrhea
- High fever
- Severe abdominal pain
- Symptoms that worsen or do not improve

Diagnosis and Treatment

- If experiencing prolonged diarrhea or other symptoms after eating fresh produce, contact the healthcare provider. Diagnosis requires laboratory testing of a stool sample.
- The recommended treatment for cyclosporiasis is an antibiotic prescribed by a healthcare provider. Early diagnosis and treatment can shorten the duration of illness.

Key Food Safety Message

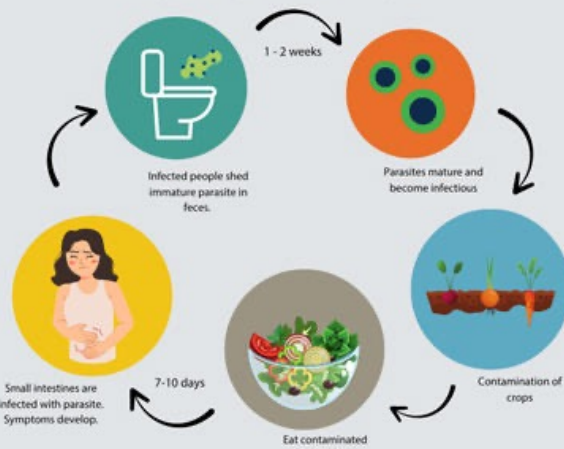
Although *Cyclospora* infections can cause significant illness, practicing good food safety and staying informed about food recalls can greatly reduce your risk. Proper handling of fresh produce, good personal hygiene, and following public health advisories are important steps in protecting yourself and your family.

Resources:

1. Association of Food and Drug Officials. (2025). Food safety resources and educational publications. <https://www.afdo.org>
2. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2025). About *Cyclospora* infection (Cyclosporiasis). <https://www.cdc.gov/cyclospora/>
3. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2025). *Cyclospora* outbreaks. <https://www.cdc.gov/cyclospora/outbreaks/>
4. U.S. Department of Agriculture, Food Safety and Inspection Service. (2025). Food safety education. <https://www.fsis.usda.gov/food-safety>

5. U.S. Food and Drug Administration. (2025). Foodborne pathogens and natural toxins handbook: *Cyclospora cayentanensis*. <https://www.fda.gov/food>
6. U.S. Food and Drug Administration. (2025). Food recalls, outbreaks, and emergencies. <https://www.fda.gov/food/outbreaks-foodborne-illness>
7. World Health Organization. (2022). Food safety. <https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/food-safety>

Cyclospora Lifecycle



For More Information

- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)
- U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA)
- U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA)
- Association of Food and Drug Officials (AFDO)



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