

# Cyclosporiasis

## Fact Sheet



Maine Center for Disease  
Control and Prevention  
An Office of the  
Department of Health and Human Services

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### What is cyclosporiasis?

Cyclosporiasis is an intestinal infection caused by *Cyclospora* (SIGH-clo-SPORE-uh) parasite that can only be seen with a microscope. The first known human cases of illness were reported in 1979. In the last several years, outbreaks have been reported in the United States and Canada.

### How is it spread?

It is spread by ingestion of contaminated water or food. Outbreaks have been linked to fresh produce. It needs time in the environment (days or weeks) after being passed in a bowel movement to become infectious. Therefore, it is unlikely that it is passed directly from one person to another. It is not known whether animals can be infected and pass infection to people. The time between being exposed and becoming sick is usually about 1 week.

### Who can get cyclosporiasis?

People of all ages may get sick. Persons with underlying illnesses can develop more severe symptoms. In the past, it has been diagnosed mainly in people who lived or traveled in developing countries. However, now the infection is found worldwide.

### What are the signs and symptoms?

Symptoms include watery diarrhea with frequent, sometimes explosive bowel movements. Other symptoms can include loss of appetite, loss of large amounts of weight, bloating, increased gas, stomach cramps, nausea, vomiting, muscle aches, low-grade fever, and fatigue.

### How will I know if I have an infection?

Speak with your healthcare provider if you have symptoms. Your provider may request a stool sample to test in a lab.

### How is it treated?

Cyclosporiasis may be treated with antibiotics. See your health care provider to discuss other possible treatment options.

### How can I prevent illness?

Thoroughly wash all fresh fruit and vegetables, particularly if traveling abroad. People who have previously been infected with *Cyclospora* can become infected again.

### How common is illness?

Cyclosporiasis is a relatively rare cause of diarrhea in the United States. Illness occurs more often in the summer months than the winter.

### Where can I get more information?

For more information about your illness, contact your healthcare provider.

You can also contact the Maine Center for Disease Control and Prevention by calling 1-800-821-5821 or access the Maine CDC website at <http://www.maine.gov/idepi>. The federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention website <http://www.cdc.gov/> is another excellent source of health information.