

CYCLOSPORIASIS FAQ's ~ July 9, 2026

Can you explain what Cyclospora is and how it makes people sick?

It is called **Cyclospora cayetanensis**, and the illness it causes is **Cyclosporiasis**. Cyclosporiasis is an intestinal illness caused by a microscopic parasite. People can become infected by consuming food or water that contains the parasite. The parasite is transmitted through feces that has contaminated the food or water.

Is cyclosporiasis transmittable person to person?

Person to person transmission is unlikely.

What are the symptoms?

Symptoms of cyclosporiasis may include

- Watery diarrhea (most common)
- Loss of appetite
- Weight loss
- Cramping
- Bloating
- Increased gas
- Nausea
- Fatigue

Less common symptoms may include

- Vomiting
- Body aches
- Headache
- Low-grade fever
- Other flu-like symptoms

How many cases are in Fulton County?

As of July 9th, 30+ reported

Are the number of cases increasing locally?

The number of cases in Ohio is growing very quickly, especially in the Northwest area bordering Southern Michigan. Michigan is also seeing a large number of cases of Cyclospora and are unsure of the cause.

Do we know the cause of the current Cyclospora outbreak?

This is an ongoing investigation involving multiple states. At this time the source of the outbreak has not been determined. Information is being gathered from confirmed cases including a history of where they have eaten in the last two weeks. We will continue to share information once it is confirmed.

Does rinsing your produce really prevent cyclosporiasis?

Based on currently available information, CDC states, the best way to prevent cyclosporiasis is to avoid food or water that may be contaminated with feces (poop). It is important to know that routine chemical disinfection or sanitization of food or water is unlikely to kill *Cyclospora*. To kill the *Cyclospora* parasite, you must cook food to an internal temperature of at least 158°F (70°C).

Can I still eat fresh produce?

Yes. Fresh fruits and vegetables are an important part of a healthy diet. Wash produce thoroughly under running water before eating or preparing it.

General Rules to Reduce Your Risk

- **Cook when you can.** Heating food to 158°F (70°C) or higher kills *Cyclospora*.
- **Wash all fresh produce** under clean running water, even if you plan to peel it.

Reminders about routine food safety practices

- Wash hands with soap and water before and after handling or preparing food.
- Scrub firm fruits and vegetables, such as melons and cucumbers, with a clean produce brush.
- Cut away any damaged or bruised areas on fruits and vegetables before preparing and eating.
- Wash and sanitize utensils and surfaces before and after handling food. Wash and sanitize display cases and refrigerators where fresh produce is stored.
- Wash and sanitize cutting boards, surfaces and utensils used to prepare, serve or store fresh produce.
- Refrigerate cut, peeled or cooked fruits and vegetables as soon as possible.

What steps should managers of public spaces take?

At locations of public assembly, make sure you have a well stocked restroom with soap, running water and a means to dry hands either with disposable paper towels or hand dryer(s). This organism is not spread through the air. A person may become ill when a person ingests feces contaminated water or food (fecal-oral route).

When should you contact a doctor or medical provider?

People experiencing gastrointestinal illness, such as sudden and ongoing diarrhea, are encouraged to contact their health care

provider. Cyclosporiasis is treated with antibiotics along with rest and drinking plenty of fluids to maintain hydration. It can take several days to receive testing results based on capacity.

Can I get this again? And how soon after?

Yes, you can get cyclosporiasis again. Contracting the parasite (*Cyclospora cayetanensis*) once does not create lasting immunity. If you are exposed to contaminated food or water in the future, you can be reinfected

In addition, if not treated, the illness may last from a few days to a month or longer.

Symptoms may seem to go away, but then return one or more times (relapse). People in poor health or those who are immunocompromised may be at a higher risk for severe or long illness.