

Cyclosporiasis- Factsheet

What is cyclosporiasis?

Cyclosporiasis is a disease caused by a coccidian protozoan called *Cyclospora cayetanensis*.

What are the symptoms of cyclosporiasis?

Illness usually begins about 2 to 14 days after being exposed to the organism. Symptoms include watery diarrhea, stomach cramping, nausea, and vomiting. Symptoms may come and go and last for about two weeks, but sometimes continue for up to a month.

How is cyclosporiasis spread?

Persons or animals become infected by swallowing the organism. This may happen when a person or animal drinks water or eats food “dirtied” or contaminated with infected stool (feces) material, usually imported fresh produce. Cyclosporiasis may also be spread if a person touches objects contaminated with the stool and gets the organism on their hands. Their unwashed hands can then transfer the organisms to their mouth.

How long are people contagious?

In most cases, stools no longer contain the organism after two weeks.

Who gets cyclosporiasis?

Anyone, but it may be more common in persons with weakened immune systems.

What treatment is available for people with cyclosporiasis?

Treatment with a drug called trimethoprim/sulfamethoxazole (TMP/SMX). Persons with diarrhea should drink plenty of fluids. People with weakened immune systems should see their doctor.

Do infected people need to be kept home from school, work or daycare?

Since *Cyclospora* is passed in the stool, children and staff in daycare centers, health care workers, or people who handle food should not go to school or work while they have diarrhea. After diarrhea ends, persons may return to work or school and they should continue to observe hand washing practices.

How can I protect myself and my family from getting cyclosporiasis?

You can decrease your chance of coming in contact with cyclosporiasis with these practices:

- Wash hands frequently with water and soap, and especially after using the toilet, changing a diaper and before preparing and/or eating meals.
- Avoid food or water from sources that may be contaminated.
- Wash fresh produce thoroughly before consuming.