

Cyclosporiasis: What Residents Need to Know

Summary

Connecticut is seeing more cases of **cyclosporiasis** this summer than last summer. It is a stomach illness you get from eating fresh fruits and vegetables that have a parasite (tiny germ) on them.

The risk to residents is low. This germ does not spread from person to person. Almost everyone that has the sickness gets better but those with weakened immune systems may experience worse symptoms or need longer treatment.

What is Cyclosporiasis?

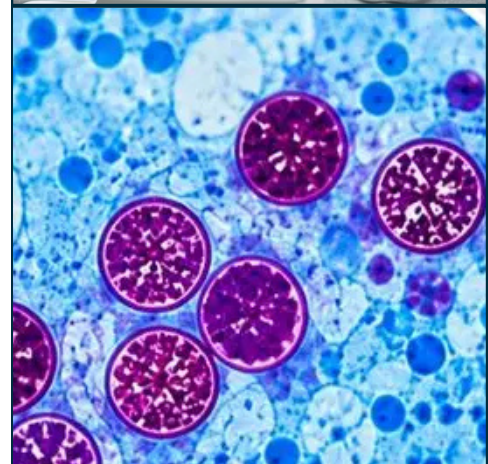
Cyclosporiasis is a **stomach illness**. It is caused by a tiny germ (a parasite) called Cyclospora. You get sick from **eating food or drinking water that has this germ on it.**

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Past outbreaks have been linked to fresh fruits and vegetables.

It does not spread from person to person. Being near a sick person is not a risk.

Most healthy people will recover from the sickness without treatment.



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What to watch for

Signs usually start about one week after eating the food. They can start as early as **2 days** or as late as **2 weeks or more**.

- **Watery diarrhea** that happens often
- **Stomach cramps and bloating**
- Not wanting to eat
- Feeling sick to the stomach
- Feeling very tired
- Losing weight
- Sometimes a mild fever

The illness may get better and then come back.



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How to stay safe

- **Wash all fresh fruits and vegetables** well under running water before eating or cooking them.
- **Buy whole heads of lettuce instead of pre-washed bagged salad.** Take off and throw away the outer leaves, then wash the rest.
- Wash fresh herbs like cilantro, basil, and green onions carefully.
- **Cook fruits and vegetables when you can.** Heat kills the germ at 158°F (70°C).
- **Wash your hands with soap and water** before you cook and before you eat.
- Clean cutting boards, knives, and counters after you cut fresh produce.



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Call your doctor if you have:

- **Diarrhea for more than 2 to 3 days**
- **Very bad or watery diarrhea** that keeps happening
- Signs of not enough water in the body
- Throwing up a lot
- Blood in the stool (poop)
- Losing a lot of weight



What we know now

More people are sick than last year, but the risk to any one person is still low.

Buying food at farmer's markets is the safest option when eating fruits and vegetables right now.

No food or restaurant in New Haven or Connecticut has been named as the cause. Health officials are still looking into it.

Almost everyone gets better fully, especially with plenty of water and a doctor's care when needed.

Questions?

Call the New Haven Health Department at (203) 946-6999. We can speak with you in English or Spanish.