

# CYCLOSPORIASIS FACTSHEET

## What is Cyclosporiasis?

Cyclosporiasis is a diarrheal disease caused by a parasite (*Cyclospora*) that infects the intestinal tract.

## Who can get Cyclosporiasis?

Anyone, but people living or traveling in tropical or subtropical regions of the world may be at increased risk for infection because cyclosporiasis is endemic (found) in some countries in these zones.

## What are the symptoms of Cyclosporiasis?

Symptoms usually include watery diarrhea, with frequent, sometimes explosive, bowel movements. Other common symptoms include loss of appetite, weight loss, stomach cramps/pain, bloating, increased gas, nausea, and fatigue. Vomiting, body aches, headache, fever, and other flu-like symptoms may be noted.

If not treated, the illness may last from a few days to a month or longer. Symptoms may seem to go away and then return one or more times (relapse).

## How soon do symptoms appear?

Typically, symptoms appear within about 1 week after becoming infected.

## How does Cyclosporiasis spread?

Cyclosporiasis is spread by people ingesting something—such as food or water—that was contaminated with feces (poop). *Cyclospora* needs time (typically, at least 1–2 weeks) after being passed in a bowel movement to become infectious for another person. Therefore, it is unlikely that Cyclosporiasis is passed directly from one person to another.

## How is Cyclosporiasis treated?

The recommended treatment is a combination of two antibiotics, trimethoprim-sulfamethoxazole, also known

as Bactrim, Septra, or Cotrim (*Note: Use of brand names is for identification only and does not imply endorsement by DC Health*). People who have diarrhea should also rest and drink plenty of fluids.

## How can people protect themselves against Cyclosporiasis?

Avoiding food or water that might have been contaminated with stool (poop) may help prevent Cyclosporiasis. In addition, always follow safe fruit and vegetable handling recommendations, including:

- **Wash:** Wash hands with soap and warm water before and after handling or preparing fruits and vegetables. Wash cutting boards, dishes, utensils, and counter tops with soap and hot water between the preparation of raw meat, poultry, and seafood products and the preparation of fruits and vegetables that will not be cooked.
- **Prepare:** Wash all fruits and vegetables not labeled “prewashed” thoroughly under running water before eating, cutting, or cooking. 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.
- **Store:** Refrigerate cut, peeled, or cooked fruits and vegetables as soon as possible, or within 2 hours. Store fruits and vegetables away from raw meat, poultry, and seafood.

## Where can I get more information?

Information about Cyclosporiasis and other related health topics can be found at [www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov). The DC Department of Health promotes the health and safety of District residents. For additional information, please visit <https://dchealth.dc.gov> or call (202) 442-9021