

ALERT: *Cyclospora* Outbreak

July 14, 2017



Serving the residents of **Curve Lake** and
Hiawatha First Nations, and the **County** and
City of Peterborough

Attention: Health Care Providers

Ontario is experiencing a large outbreak of *Cyclospora* infection. As of July 11, 2017, 52 locally-acquired cyclosporiasis cases have been reported in Ontario since May 1, which is substantially higher than the same time period in previous years. Additional cases continue to be reported. The purpose of this communication is to provide information about cyclosporiasis to support prompt diagnosis and treatment of infected patients.

- **Diagnosis:** *Cyclospora* infection can be diagnosed by a stool ova and parasite (O&P) examination. **If patients present with cyclosporiasis-compatible symptoms between now and the end of summer, please request a stool ova and parasite (O&P) on the lab requisition. It may be helpful on the lab requisition to also specify the request to rule out *Cyclospora*.**
- **Treatment:** First-line treatment of laboratory-confirmed *Cyclospora* is trimethoprim-sulfamethoxazole (TMP-SMX).

Additional information and resources on cyclosporiasis are provided below.

What is cyclosporiasis?

Cyclosporiasis is a gastrointestinal illness caused by infection with the parasite *Cyclospora cayetanensis*. It is commonly characterized by frequent watery diarrhea, as well as other symptoms such as anorexia, fatigue, abdominal cramps, nausea, and myalgia. Left untreated, symptoms typically last 6 to 7 weeks and can wax and wane in intensity. Symptoms typically improve within 2 to 3 days of starting trimethoprim-sulfamethoxazole (TMP-SMX), the first-line treatment for cyclosporiasis.

How is Cyclospora infection acquired?

People are infected by ingesting food or water infected with the parasite. As *Cyclospora* is not endemic in Canada, most reported cases in Ontario are infected when visiting an endemic country (e.g., countries in the Caribbean, South and Central America, South and South East Asia). However, when cases occur in individuals who did not travel, an investigation is launched. Outbreaks of locally-acquired infections have been related to produce such as berries or herbs imported from *Cyclospora* endemic countries. The infection is usually transmitted by consuming contaminated water or food, and not person to person. The incubation period is usually a week.

Additional resources on cyclosporiasis

For more details on *Cyclospora* infection, see: [Cyclospora Information for Health Professionals](#) visit www.canada.ca and search [For health professionals: Cyclosporiasis \(Cyclospora\)](#)

For more information on cyclosporiasis in Ontario, including links to testing information, visit www.publichealthontario.ca search [cyclosporiasis](#)

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