
CYCLOSPORIASIS (CYCLOSPORA INFECTION) FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

1. What is cyclosporiasis (Cyclospora infection)?

Cyclosporiasis (sigh-clo-spore-EYE-uh-sis) is a diarrheal disease caused by an intestinal infection with the microscopic parasite *Cyclospora cayetanensis*.

2. How do people get cyclosporiasis?

Cyclospora parasites are passed in the feces of infected people. Other people become infected by eating food or drinking water contaminated with the feces from an infected person. *Cyclospora* passed in feces take days to weeks in the environment to become infectious to another person. Therefore, it is unlikely that the infection is passed directly from person to person.

3. Where does cyclosporiasis occur?

Cyclosporiasis occurs in many countries, but it is most common in tropical and subtropical regions. In the United States, foodborne outbreaks of cyclosporiasis have been linked to various types of fresh produce imported from Latin America, including raspberries, cilantro, basil, snow peas, and mixed salad.

4. What are the symptoms of cyclosporiasis?

Symptoms of cyclosporiasis usually begin one to two weeks after being infected. The symptoms may include:

- Watery diarrhea
- Loss of appetite
- Weight loss
- Bloating
- Stomach cramps
- Increased gas
- Nausea
- Fatigue

Vomiting and low-grade fever may also occur. If not treated, the symptoms may last from several days to several weeks. Some symptoms, such as diarrhea, may seem to go away and then return (relapse). Some people who are infected with *Cyclospora* do not have any symptoms.

5. How is cyclosporiasis diagnosed?

Your healthcare provider may ask you to submit one or more samples of your feces to see if you are infected with *Cyclospora*. In addition, your healthcare provider may have your feces checked for other organisms that can cause similar symptoms.

6. How is cyclosporiasis treated?

Cyclosporiasis can be treated with trimethoprim-sulfamethoxazole, an antibiotic that is effective against *Cyclospora* parasites. Diarrhea can cause dehydration, so it is important to drink plenty of fluids.

7. What can a person do to prevent cyclosporiasis?

Follow these prevention steps:

- Wash hands with soap and water before and after handling or preparing raw fruits and vegetables.
- Wash all fruits and vegetables thoroughly under running water before eating, cutting, or cooking. Scrub firm produce (like melons and cucumbers) with a clean produce brush.
- Remove and discard outer leaves from lettuce and leafy greens.
- For vulnerable populations (older adults, young children, pregnant women, immunocompromised individuals), cook vegetables and herbs whenever practical.
- Prevent cross-contamination: Use clean cutting boards, utensils, and food-contact surfaces. Keep ready-to-eat foods separate from raw produce during preparation.
- Refrigerate cut, peeled, or cooked fruits and vegetables as soon as possible (within two hours).
- Avoid food or water that may be contaminated by human feces, especially when traveling to countries where tap water or food may be unsafe.

People who have previously been infected with *Cyclospora* can become infected again.

For additional information regarding cyclosporiasis, please follow the link below.

<https://www.fda.gov/food/foodborne-pathogens/cyclospora>