

# Cyclospora Poisoning



## WHAT IS CYCLOSPORA POISONING?

“Cyclospora” is a single celled organism that causes intestinal illness in humans. All cases of the illness are caused by a single strain, *Cyclospora cayentanensis*.



## HOW IS CYCLOSPORA POISONING CONTRACTED?

The cause of Cyclospora infections is usually ingesting food or water that has been contaminated with feces. Cyclospora is not immediately infectious, as it needs days or weeks to grow before it can infect humans. As a result, person to person transmission is rare. In many cases, fresh produce is the means through which the infection occurs. Outbreaks have been tied to many different types of produce, including basil, raspberries, snow peas, and cilantro. Cyclospora is more common in tropical and subtropical regions. It also tends to have a more seasonal infection pattern, although the factors for this pattern have not yet been identified.



## RECOVERY AND LONG-TERM EFFECTS

It is common for people infected with Cyclospora to recover on their own with hydration and rest. The symptoms may end after a few days, or they may last for longer periods of time. Cyclospora infections have a tendency to cause relapse, which means that the diarrhea can go away and come back several times for up to a few months.

Treatments do exist for Cyclospora infections, usually in the form of a combination of antibiotics. Medications such as Bactrim and Septra contain a chemical called trimethoprim-sulfamethoxazole, often called sulfa, which can treat the infection. For those that are allergic to sulfa drugs, there is no treatment currently available. There is also no vaccine that prevents the infection.



## SYMPTOMS

Symptoms of Cyclospora infection can appear as soon as 2 days or as long as 11 days after ingesting the parasite, although generally the symptoms will appear after one week. Because Cyclospora infects the small intestine, it causes symptoms such as watery diarrhea, loss of appetite, stomach cramps, weight loss, nausea, fatigue, and vomiting.



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