



Cyclospora Fact Sheet

What is *Cyclospora*?

Cyclospora cayetanensis is a single-celled parasite that can infect the intestines. It is very common in some parts of the world, such as tropical areas.

Who is at risk to get *Cyclospora* infections?

Anyone can get infected with *Cyclospora*. People who live in or travel to tropical and subtropical destinations may be more likely to get infected because *Cyclospora* is more common in these places.

How is *Cyclospora* spread?

Cyclospora lives in the guts of humans and animals, and is shed in the feces of infected individuals. A special immature form of *Cyclospora* called an “unsporulated oocyst” is shed in the poop. The unsporulated oocyst is not infectious, and can’t make people sick until it matures into a sporulated oocyst. It takes days to weeks of living in the environment outside of a human for the oocyst to sporulate. Because of this, ***Cyclospora* is not directly passed from one person to another**. A new person gets infected by ingesting the parasite, which could be in contaminated water food.

What are the symptoms of *Cyclospora* infection?

The most common symptom is watery diarrhea, which can be frequent and urgent. Other symptoms can include loss of appetite, weight loss, stomach cramps, bloating, nausea, and fatigue. Fever, headaches, and vomiting have also been observed. Some people will have no symptoms. Symptoms can last anywhere from a few days to a month or more. They may go away and then return (relapse).

How soon after exposure do symptoms appear?

The average incubation period is 1 week.

How is this disease diagnosed?

Lab tests are done on stool specimens to identify *Cyclospora*. Because infected people don’t always shed the parasite, it may take several stool samples from different days to catch the bug. Special tests are needed to identify *Cyclospora*, so healthcare providers must specifically ask the lab to look for *Cyclospora*.

What is the treatment for crypto infection?

A healthcare provider can prescribe antibiotics to treat *Cyclospora*. Drinking plenty of fluids to prevent dehydration is recommended.

What can be done to prevent the spread of this disease?

- WASH YOUR HANDS thoroughly after using the bathroom, changing diapers, or before preparing food. Wash your hands after contact with animals or their environments.
- Avoid food or water that might have become contaminated with stool.