



CYCLOSPORA FACT SHEET

August 11, 2016

Cyclosporiasis is a gastrointestinal illness caused by the *Cyclospora* parasite. *Cyclospora* is endemic to Peru, Haiti, and Nepal¹, however the parasite is found in many other tropical countries.

How is it spread?

Transmission of cyclosporiasis to humans occurs from the consumption of food or water that has been contaminated with *Cyclospora*. Human or animal waste containing *Cyclospora* can contaminate water supplies if water treatment and waste management systems are inadequately implemented. Humans are at risk of infection when water contaminated with *Cyclospora* is used for food production (i.e. crops), washing of foods, or as direct drinking water. In addition, farm workers and food handlers who are infected with *Cyclospora* can contaminate food and water if they do not adhere to appropriate sanitation techniques (see 'Prevention' below).

Symptoms

Symptoms of *Cyclospora* infection include watery diarrhea, abdominal cramps, bloating, nausea, fatigue, low grade fever and weight loss. Individuals typically begin to present with symptoms between 2-11 days after infection. Symptoms may last for up to 6-7 weeks, during which time it is recommended to drink more fluids than usual to avoid becoming dehydrated due to diarrheal symptoms. Individuals are advised to seek medical attention if they begin to manifest symptoms. Those at increased risk of more severe illness include young children, the elderly, and those with weakened immune systems.

Treatment

There is no immunization available for cyclosporiasis. In otherwise healthy individuals, symptoms typically resolve without treatment. In cases where symptoms are severe/debilitating, prolonged or reoccurring past the normal period of illness (6-7 weeks), treatment for cyclosporiasis may be provided by a health care provider to shorten the duration of symptoms.

Prevention

Ensuring that water treatment and waste management systems meet international standards can prevent food and water from becoming contaminated with *Cyclospora*. In addition, contamination of food and water can also be prevented in the food service and production industries by workers adhering to good sanitation practices, including:

- Frequent and adequate hand washing
- Preventing cross contamination of foods and liquids
- Appropriate storage and cooking techniques
- Not working when sick



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REFERENCES

1. Lawley, R., Curtis, L., & Davis, J. (2008). Cyclospora. *The food safety hazard guidebook* (pp. 141-144) RSC publishing.

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