

CYCLOSPORIASIS



Cyclosporiasis is an illness that causes diarrhea and stomach pain. It is caused by the *Cyclospora cayentanensis* parasite, which is so small it can only be seen with a microscope. The parasite is common in tropical countries. In the U.S., people can get sick by traveling to or eating fresh produce imported from tropical countries.



What causes it?

- ▶ The *Cyclospora* parasite is spread when people eat or drink something that has been contaminated with poop, especially fresh produce (herbs, vegetables, berries) and untreated water.
- ▶ *Cyclospora* cannot be spread from person-to-person.



What are the signs and symptoms?

Most people with cyclosporiasis have symptoms that start one week after eating or drinking food or water with *Cyclospora*. Some people may have symptoms that come and go over time. Some people may not have any symptoms. Diarrhea can last several weeks or more if not treated.

- ▶ Watery diarrhea (sometimes explosive)
- ▶ Gas or bloating
- ▶ Not feeling hungry and losing weight
- ▶ Feeling sick to your stomach
- ▶ Stomach cramps
- ▶ Feeling very tired



What are the treatment options?

- ▶ In order to test for cyclosporiasis, your doctor will ask for a sample of your poop. You may have to submit more than one sample. The poop will then be tested to see if it has the *Cyclospora* parasite.
- ▶ Cyclosporiasis can be treated with antibiotics. Getting rest and drinking fluids are especially important if you have diarrhea.

How can it be prevented?

- ▶ When traveling and eating food in other countries, do not eat raw produce or uncooked foods. If you can't cook it, peel it, or wash it in safe water, don't eat it. Drink only bottled water and avoid ice.
- ▶ At home, always follow safe fruit and vegetable handling recommendations including:
 - ▶ Wash your hands with soap and water before preparing food.
 - ▶ Wash all fruits and vegetables thoroughly under running water before eating, cutting, or cooking.
 - ▶ Scrub firm fruits and vegetables, such as melons and cucumbers, with a clean produce brush.
 - ▶ Wash cutting boards, dishes, utensils, and counter tops with soap and hot water.

