



## **HEALTH ADVISORY: *Cyclospora* Infection Associated with Salads at Fast Food Chain**

*Issued: 07/12/2018*

The Iowa Department of Public Health, Iowa Department of Inspections and Appeals (DIA), the State Hygienic Laboratory and local public health agencies are working to investigate an increase in *Cyclospora* infections that appear to be connected to consumption of McDonald's salads. This week, the Iowa Department of Public Health has identified 15 Iowans who ate McDonald's salads in late June to early July prior to getting ill. The Illinois Department of Public Health has noted a similar increase in cases associated with the product.

### **Local health departments:**

- Field epidemiologists will be contacting local public health partners when cases are reported to ensure availability to conduct the investigation in a timely manner (if unavailable, CADE will investigate).

### **Laboratories:**

- If patients test positive for *Cyclospora*, please send the specimen to the State Hygienic Laboratory for additional typing/analysis.
- Report cases to public health, *Cyclospora* infections are reportable in Iowa.

### **Healthcare providers:**

- Consider *Cyclospora* infection in patients presenting with watery diarrhea, loss of appetite, weight loss, stomach cramps, bloating, nausea and fatigue. Symptoms can be transient for weeks to months without treatment.
- If suspected, collect a stool specimen and request *Cyclospora*-specific testing (i.e., the special acid fast stain that is needed to identify oocysts or PCR testing).
- Specific antibiotic treatment (not typically used to treat common diarrheal illnesses) can be prescribed.
- Report cases to public health; *Cyclospora* infections are reportable in Iowa.

### **Talking Points:**

*Cyclospora* is a parasite that can infect people who consume food or water contaminated with sporulated oocysts. Oocysts require 1-2 weeks in the environment to sporulate; therefore, direct person-to-person transmission is unlikely.

*Cyclospora* is commonly found in developing countries, but in the past several years, several outbreaks have occurred in the U.S., especially during the summer months. These outbreaks and illnesses often occur as a result of eating contaminated fresh produce.

Symptoms of *Cyclospora* infection include:

- Frequent watery diarrhea (This lasts an average of 57 days, if untreated.)
- Loss of appetite and weight
- Cramping, bloating, and/or increased gas
- Nausea (vomiting is less common)

- Fatigue
- Low-grade fever

It may take a week or more after consuming contaminated product for symptoms to begin.

Persons who have any of these symptoms, should see their health care provider who can specifically order Cyclospora parasite testing and provide appropriate treatment. IDPH and local health department personnel are continuing to conduct interviews with individuals who test positive for Cyclospora and further cases may be identified.

Public health is promptly investigating all reported cases to identify common exposures and assess any ongoing risk.

For more information about cyclosporiasis, visit:

<https://www.idph.iowa.gov/cade/disease-information/cyclospora>

<https://www.cdc.gov/parasites/cyclosporiasis/index.html>



## *IDPH News Release*

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Date

Contact: Polly Carver-Kimm

[Polly.Carver-Kimm@idph.iowa.gov](mailto:Polly.Carver-Kimm@idph.iowa.gov)

# **Cyclospora Infections Associated with Salad at Fast Food Chain**

The Iowa Department of Public Health (IDPH) is investigating an increase in Cyclospora infections that appear to be connected to consumption of McDonald's salads. The Illinois Department of Public Health has noted a similar increase in cases associated with the product.

"This summer there have been several clusters of Cyclospora illness associated with various foods that are commercially available. This week IDPH has identified 15 Iowans who ate McDonald's salads in late June to early July prior to getting ill," said Dr. Patricia Quinlisk. "Anyone who ate these salads since the middle of June and who developed diarrhea, especially watery diarrhea and fatigue, should see their health care provider and get tested for Cyclospora to ensure an accurate diagnosis and appropriate treatment."

McDonald's is concerned about this situation and has been fully cooperating with IDPH, the Illinois Department of Health and the Iowa Department of Inspections and Appeals. McDonald's and involved federal partners continue to investigate to determine what further steps should be taken.

Cyclospora is a parasite commonly found in developing countries, but in the past several years, several outbreaks have occurred in the U.S., especially during the summer months. These outbreaks and illnesses often occur as a result of eating contaminated fresh produce. Symptoms of Cyclospora infection include:

- Frequent watery diarrhea

- Loss of appetite and weight
- Cramping, bloating, and/or increased gas
- Nausea (vomiting is less common)
- Fatigue
- Low-grade fever

It may take a week or more after consuming contaminated product for symptoms to begin.

If you have any of these symptoms, see your health care provider who can specifically order Cyclospora parasite testing and provide appropriate treatment. IDPH and local health department personnel are continuing to conduct interviews with individuals who test positive for Cyclospora and further cases may be identified.

###