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From the Office of Dr. Joyce Lock, Medical Officer of Health, Southwestern Public Health

Locally Acquired Cyclosporiasis

Current Situation

Ontario is experiencing an increase in the number of *Cyclospora* infections. There have been 113 locally acquired cyclosporiasis cases reported in the province between April 1 and August 6, 2019. Four of these cases are from Southwestern Public Health. Testing for *Cyclospora* supports the prompt treatment of patients, lessens the duration of symptoms, and assist with identifying the source of illness.

- **Diagnosis:** *Cyclospora* infection can be diagnosed by submitting a stool sample for ova and parasite testing to your local or the [Public Health Ontario Laboratory](#) using the [General Test Requisition form](#).
- **Treatment:** [First line treatment](#) is trimethoprim-sulfamethoxazole (TMP-SMX)

What is Cyclosporiasis?

Cyclosporiasis is a gastrointestinal illness caused by infection with the parasite *Cyclospora cayetanensis*, commonly characterized by frequent water diarrhea, and other symptoms such as anorexia, fatigue, abdominal cramps, nausea, and myalgia. Left untreated, symptoms typically last 6 to 7 weeks and can wax and wane in intensity. Symptoms generally improve within 2 to 3 days of starting the first-line treatment for cyclosporiasis.

How is *Cyclospora* infection acquired?

People are infected by ingesting food or water contaminated with the parasite. *Cyclospora* is not endemic in Canada. Most reported cases in Ontario are infected when visiting an endemic country (e.g. in the Caribbean, South and Central America, South and South East Asia) or during annual spring/summer outbreaks of cyclosporiasis. When cases occur in individuals who did not travel (as is currently occurring in Ontario), an investigation is launched to determine potential sources of *Cyclospora* in imported foods. Most outbreaks of locally acquired infections are likely due to fresh produce such as berries or herbs that are imported from *Cyclospora* endemic countries. The infection is unlikely to spread from person to person.

Additional Resources on Cyclosporiasis

For details see the Government of Canada site: [For health professionals: Cyclosporiasis \(Cyclospora\)](#)
For Ontario specific information, including links to testing see Public Health Ontario's: [Cyclosporiasis](#)

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