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Category: Infectious Disease Prevention

IDPH Cyclospora Outbreak Investigation Update

The Iowa Department of Public Health (IDPH) continues to receive reports of confirmed cases of *Cyclospora* infection, but numbers are decreasing. In addition, the onset dates of the illness suggest the ill people had eaten the contaminated food in mid-June. This is a very good indication the food which was the source of the outbreak has already been consumed or discarded, since fresh vegetables have a limited shelf life. At no time was an Iowa-grown fruit or vegetable suspected to be the cause of the outbreak.

IDPH encourages Iowans to make fruits and vegetables part of their daily diet. It is always a good idea to wash all fresh fruits and vegetables thoroughly before eating.

"We know fresh produce (fruits and vegetables) has been implicated in previous *Cyclospora* outbreaks, and interviews with those who have been ill indicate vegetables were probably the source of this outbreak," said IDPH Medical Director, Dr. Patricia Quinlisk. "The illness onset dates coupled with the shelf life of fresh produce, make it very likely the vegetable that was the source of the outbreak has already been eaten or thrown away, and will not cause anyone else to become ill."

IDPH continues to work with the CDC, other states, other Iowa state agencies and local public health agencies in the investigation of the *Cyclospora* outbreak to ensure there is no continuing exposure to contaminated food, and to try to understand how the food became contaminated in the first place.

As of today, 81 cases of *Cyclospora* infections have been reported to IDPH; almost all have been identified through testing at the State Hygienic Lab (SHL), including:

- Linn County - 31 cases
- Polk County - 5 cases
- Pottawattamie County - 5 cases
- Black Hawk County - 4 cases
- Fayette County - 3 cases
- O'Brien County - 3 cases
- Dallas County - 3 cases
- Buchanan County - 3 cases
- Webster County - 3 cases
- Boone County - 3 cases
- Mills County - 2 cases
- Des Moines County - 2 cases
- Dubuque County - 2 cases
- Benton County - 1 case
- Keokuk County - 1 case
- Monona County - 1 case
- Butler County - 1 case
- Winneshiek County - 1 case
- Johnson County - 1 case
- Montgomery County - 1 case

- Van Buren County - 1 case
- Story County - 1 case
- Cedar County - 1 case
- Woodbury County - 1 case

At least five people have been hospitalized. Many people report still being ill with diarrhea and some have had relapses. Specific treatment is available (but it is not typically used for more common diarrheal illnesses). Also, very specific laboratory testing (not commonly ordered) must be done to detect *Cyclospora*.

People become infected with *Cyclospora* by consuming food or water contaminated with the parasite, which causes a watery diarrhea that lasts an average of 57 days if untreated. Symptoms of cyclosporiasis include:

- Watery diarrhea
- Fatigue (severe tiredness)
- Loss of appetite
- Weight loss
- Bloating
- Increased gas
- Stomach cramps
- Nausea
- Vomiting
- Muscle aches
- Low-grade fever

For more information, visit [www.idph.state.ia.us/EHI/Issue.aspx?issue=Cyclospora Outbreak Investigation](http://www.idph.state.ia.us/EHI/Issue.aspx?issue=Cyclospora%20Outbreak%20Investigation).

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