



July 8, 2013,

To: Douglas County Health Care Providers
From: Adi M. Pour, PhD, Health Director, Douglas County Health Department

RE: Possible outbreak of *Cyclospora cayetanensis* infections; test patients with consistent symptoms and request a specific test for *Cyclospora*

In the last week, 11 cases of *Cyclospora cayetanensis* infection have been identified in Douglas County. The Douglas County Health Department (DCHD) is investigating the outbreak along with the Iowa Department of Public Health, the Nebraska DHHS, and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) to identify the source. Currently there are 22 cases in Iowa and 16 cases (total) in Nebraska.

We have not yet been able to identify a common source. It is possible that it is due to a broadly distributed fresh produce item. Routine testing of stool for ova and parasites generally does not include the special staining procedures required to identify *Cyclospora*, and therefore there may be many more unrecognized cases. **Health care providers are advised to test anyone with consistent symptoms and must state on the laboratory order that they would like *Cyclospora* testing included.**

The symptoms of *Cyclospora* infection are distinct from other diarrheal illnesses in that symptoms last an average of fifty-seven (57) days in untreated patients. Infected individuals may have 5 to 15 bouts of watery diarrhea per day. Fatigue and anorexia are prominent and other symptoms include nausea, flatulence, abdominal cramping, low-grade fever, and weight loss. Persons who are immune-compromised will have more severe and longer lasting symptoms. Recommended treatment is trimethoprim-sulfamethoxazole twice daily for 7 days (160 mg trimethoprim and 800 mg sulfamethoxazole in adults).

Important: *Cyclospora* must be specifically ordered on the laboratory request.

Cyclosporiasis is an intestinal illness caused by the microscopic parasite *Cyclospora cayetanensis*. People can become infected with *Cyclospora* by consuming food or water contaminated with the parasite. *Cyclospora* is not spread person to person. In the United States, foodborne outbreaks of cyclosporiasis, identified since the mid-1990s, have been linked to various types of fresh produce, including raspberries, basil, snow peas, and mesclun lettuce; no commercially frozen or canned produce has been implicated.

Please call the DCHD Communicable Disease Epidemiology Section at 402.444.7214 if you have any questions or need to report a case.