



June 29, 2017

Office of the
Chief Medical
Health Officer

***Cyclospora* Outbreak**

BC is experiencing an outbreak of *Cyclospora* infection with 6 locally-acquired cases reported since May 1. To date, no cases have been confirmed on Vancouver Island. We are requesting your assistance to diagnose infected patients to assist with the outbreak investigation.

Cyclospora cayetanensis is a parasite which causes a prolonged gastrointestinal infection. Symptoms include frequent watery diarrhea, anorexia, abdominal cramps and bloating, nausea and flatulence. Symptoms typically last several weeks to over a month and wax and wane in intensity. People are infected by ingesting contaminated food or water. The infection is not spread from person-to-person. See here for more details on *Cyclospora* infection: <http://www.bccdc.ca/health-info/diseases-conditions/cyclospora-infection>

Cyclospora is not endemic in Canada. Most people are infected when visiting an endemic country in Latin America or South East Asia in the spring and early summer. When cases occur in Canadians who did not travel, an outbreak investigation is launched. Most outbreaks occur in the spring and early summer and are due to imported produce such as berries or herbs.

Cyclospora infection is diagnosed by a stool ova and parasite (O&P) examination. A special request must be made for *Cyclospora* diagnosis to ensure the appropriate stain is used by the lab. See here for BC Guideline for Ordering Stool Specimens: <http://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/health/practitioner-professional-resources/bc-guidelines/infectious-diarrhea>

If patients present with *Cyclospora*-compatible symptoms between now and August, and you are ordering a stool test, please include a request for stool O&P and indicate on the lab requisition "*Cyclospora* diagnosis". This will help you accurately diagnose the infection and will assist the outbreak investigation.

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