CYCLOSPORA UPDATE

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What is Cyclospora?

- Cyclosporiasis is an intestinal illness caused by a parasite called *Cyclospora*.
- This parasite can only be seen with a microscope.
- People get sick when they eat or drink food or water that is contaminated with this parasite.
- North Carolina is among dozens of U.S. states experiencing an increase of cyclosporiasis cases this summer.

Signs and Symptoms:

- The main symptom of cyclosporiasis is watery diarrhea, with frequent bowel movements.

- People usually feel sick about one week after exposure to the parasite.

Signs and Symptoms:

- Loss of appetite
- Weight loss
- Stomach cramps and pain
- Bloating
- Increased gas
- Nausea
- Fatigue

Some people may also experience:

- Vomiting
- Body aches
- Headache
- Fever
- Flu-like symptoms

*Some people who are infected **may not have any symptoms**.*

Current Case Counts

Level	Cases (since May 1)	Hospitalizations	Deaths
National	1,645	141	0
North Carolina	561	16	0
Buncombe County	4	0	0

Source: NCDHHS, CDC, Buncombe County

Buncombe County Public Health Priorities

- **Enhanced surveillance:** tracking and reporting locally
- **Case investigations:** interviews to identify exposures
- **Communication:** contact with medical providers with guidance
- **Coordination:** state and federal agencies
- **Education:** food safety and hygiene

Guidance for the Public

- Wash all produce well under running water; gently scrub firm items.
- Remove outer leaves of leafy greens and discard bruised areas.
- Cook produce to significantly reduce the risk of illness.
- Hand hygiene: wash hands for at least 20 seconds before eating/preparing food and after bathroom use.
- Stay hydrated, seek care for persistent diarrhea, and stay home if sick.



Key Takeaways

- Cyclospora is a seasonal parasitic illness with increasing national and state cases.
- Symptoms appear about a week after exposure.
- Frequent watery diarrhea is the most common symptom.
- Buncombe County has 4 cases, no hospitalizations or deaths.
- Public health response is centered on surveillance, investigation, and education.
- Community should properly wash produce, practice good hygiene, stay home when sick, and seek medical attention.