

Massachusetts *Cyclospora* Season 2026 Talking Points for LBOHs

Information as of 7/21/26

The increase in *Cyclospora* cases observed nationally has not been seen in MA to date.

- This year, CDC is reporting a large number of domestically acquired cyclosporiasis cases in multiple states. Some of these cases are associated with a large multistate outbreak occurring in at least five midwestern states including Michigan, Ohio, Indiana, West Virginia and Kentucky. This outbreak has been linked to iceberg lettuce from Taylor Farms de Mexico.
- *Cyclospora* cases are reported in Massachusetts every year and these cases are reported to the CDC. <https://www.mass.gov/info-details/foodborne-and-waterborne-illness-data>
- At this time, Massachusetts does not have evidence of a significantly unusual number of *Cyclospora* cases compared to previous years. Massachusetts case counts can be found online: [Foodborne and waterborne illness reported in Massachusetts](#). The next case count update will be posted in the first week of August.
- Massachusetts is investigating one facility-based cluster of cases with a possible common food exposure; this is not known to be associated with the outbreak in the Midwest.
- Heightened public awareness may drive additional testing, leading to an increase in reported cases.
- An increase in cases may occur from MA residents traveling to locations where an outbreak is occurring.

Recalled iceberg lettuce implicated in the Midwest outbreak was distributed in Massachusetts.

- On July 17, 2026, Taylor Farms de Mexico issued a voluntary recall of all iceberg lettuce sourced from central Mexico. This lettuce was distributed to food service locations (e.g. restaurants) in Massachusetts.
- When a recall occurs, the Division of Food Protection collects distributor information and will conduct recall effectiveness checks with the distributors to confirm implicated products have been removed for sale.
- The most up-to-date recall information can be found here: [Investigation of 5-State Outbreak of Cyclospora Illnesses: Iceberg Lettuce \(July 2026\) | FDA](#)

DPH works with local boards of health to investigate reported cases of *Cyclospora*.

- The Massachusetts Department of Public Health (DPH) works with local boards of health to investigate reported cases of *Cyclospora*. From May through August, MA public health officials prioritize the rapid interviewing of reported *Cyclospora* cases to collect information about fresh produce consumed in the 14 days prior to getting sick. This information helps DPH and CDC detect local and national outbreaks.
- Undiagnosed individuals who suspect they have become ill after eating food prepared outside of a private home, such as at a restaurant, or after a party or event are encouraged to report it to DPH on the [Report My Meal](#) page.

- Reports of any foodborne illness in a person are shared with the local board of health in their town/city of residence. The board of health performs the case investigation which includes asking questions about food history to identify possible exposures.

DPH monitors data for common exposures and reports information to CDC to aid national surveillance.

- Food exposures reported across *Cyclospora* cases are reviewed on an on-going basis by DPH epidemiologists looking for evidence of clusters of cases with a common exposure.
- Once a case is reported to DPH, the information is reported to CDC automatically and electronically that same day. This is standard process and results in timely sharing with CDC.
- Information obtained from case interviews including food histories is provided separately through a second CDC system.

People get sick with *Cyclospora* from eating fresh, uncooked produce that has been contaminated.

- The *Cyclospora* organism is not common in the US environment and is more often found in tropical areas. Many cases of cyclosporiasis in the US are associated with international travel and exposure abroad.
- Outside of the US in places where *Cyclospora* is endemic, exposure can be related to consuming fresh, uncooked produce or drinking contaminated water.
- In the US, people can get sick with *Cyclospora* from eating fresh, uncooked produce that has been contaminated. Cases acquired in the US tend to occur between May and August. *Cyclospora* is not spread directly from one person to another.
- Previous outbreaks in the US have been related to fresh produce such as raspberries, basil, cilantro, parsley, broccoli, snow peas, sugar snap peas, and leafy greens. Although cyclospora is not endemic in the US, outbreaks have been associated with produce grown both in the US and outside of the country.

People can take steps to reduce their risk of *Cyclospora* infection.

- **Monitor reports from DPH, FDA, and CDC** for announcements regarding specific foods that are linked to current *Cyclospora* outbreaks that consumers should avoid.
 - No specific food, distributor, or facility has been linked to reported Massachusetts cases as of July 21, 2026.
- Consider the following when consuming fresh produce during the summer:
 - **Wash hands** with soap and water for at least 20 seconds before and after handling or preparing raw fruits and vegetables.
 - **Rinse fresh produce** under clear running water, even if it is labeled as pre-washed. Use a clean vegetable brush to scrub firm produce like melons and cucumbers. Produce that can be peeled should be washed prior to peeling. Do not use soap or bleach to rinse produce. Rinsing is an important first step but does not reliably eliminate the parasite.

- **Discard the outer layer of fruits and vegetables** when possible. Peel produce like cucumbers and remove two to three of the outer layers of leafy greens like heads of lettuce.
- For any produce that can be cooked, **cook to a temperature of at least 158°F (70°C)**. *Cyclospora* cannot survive at these elevated temperatures.
- **Avoid cross-contamination** by cleaning kitchen counter tops, cutting boards, and utensils with hot, soapy water after contact with fresh produce.

People who develop symptoms of *Cyclospora* should contact their doctor for evaluation.

- The most common symptom of *Cyclospora* is watery diarrhea. Other symptoms include weight loss, not feeling hungry, bloating, lots of gas, cramps, nausea, and fatigue. Symptoms typically begin about a week after ingesting *Cyclospora* and can last anywhere from a few days to a month or longer.
- Testing for *Cyclospora* is not always automatically included in testing for the causes of diarrheal illness. Healthcare providers may need to specially request testing for this parasite.
- *Cyclospora* infection can be treated with antibiotics following a diagnosis.

Learn more about *Cyclospora*

- [Cyclospora | FDA](#)
- [Cyclospora | CDC](#)
- [Cyclospora | Mass.gov](#)
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