

## Massachusetts *Cyclospora* Season 2026 Talking Points for LBOHs

*Information as of 8/19/26*

*This situation continues to evolve rapidly. These talking points will be updated on a weekly basis as additional information becomes available.*

### **Reported cases of *Cyclospora* in Massachusetts have increased over the last several weeks and reports of new cases are beginning to decline.**

- Massachusetts began seeing an increase in *Cyclospora* cases with no out-of-state travel in mid-July. The number of cases reported each week to DPH remained high until last week (the week of 8/9/26) when we saw a decline in reported cases.
- Many cases currently being reported became ill during the first two weeks of July, representing a delay in diagnosis or reporting rather than ongoing exposure to contaminated produce.
- As of August 1, 2026, 147 *Cyclospora* cases have been reported among MA residents so far this year. Two of these cases occurred before the *Cyclospora* season (May 1 – August 31). There were 9 cases in May, 32 cases in June, and 104 cases in July reported to date.
- 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 September.
- *Cyclospora* cases are reported in Massachusetts every year and seasonal increases in cases are common during the summer months. Between 2016 and 2025, the annual number of cases ranged between 23 and 211.
- Massachusetts is investigating 9 local clusters associated with a residential community, healthcare setting, or food establishment. These clusters range in size from having 2 to 12 cases. Some of these settings received recalled Taylor Farms produce.
- CDC is continuing to report a significantly increased number of domestically acquired cyclosporiasis cases in multiple states.
- Heightened public awareness may be driving additional testing, contributing to the increase in reported cases.

### **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.
- There are Massachusetts *Cyclospora* cases who report exposure to food establishments known to have received the recalled iceberg lettuce. These exposures took place both in and outside of Massachusetts.
- When a recall occurs, the Division of Food Protection collects distributor information and will conduct recall effectiveness checks with the MA distributors to confirm implicated products have been removed for sale.
- The most up-to-date recall information can be found here: [Investigation of Multistate 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.
- 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](#) (recently updated)
- [Subscribe to receive email notification of FDA Recalls and Safety Alerts](#)