

Sujan Acharya, Ph.D.

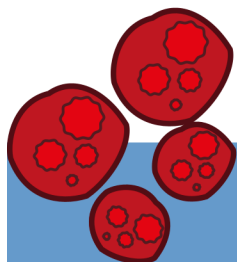
Assistant Professor
of Food Science
Preventive Controls
Qualified Individual

904 Chestnut Street
Jefferson City, MO 65101
573-681-5212
AcharyaS@LincolnU.edu

Joshua Dunne

Commercial
Kitchen Manager
Preventive Controls
Qualified Individual

900 Leslie Blvd
Jefferson City, MO 65101
573-681-5015
DunneJ@LincolnU.edu



Scrub your hands with
soap and warm water.

Give fresh produce a
good rinse under clean
running water before
you eat it.

Peel away and toss the
outermost layers of
produce when you can.

Trim off any bruised or
damaged spots.

Bringing food up to at
least 158°F (70°C) will
destroy the germ.

Fact Sheet

CYCLOSPORIASIS



What Is Cyclospora, and What Is Cyclosporiasis?

Cyclospora is a tiny parasite that you can only see with a microscope. If you eat food or drink water that has this germ in it, you can catch an intestinal illness known as Cyclosporiasis, which upsets your stomach and gut and often brings on diarrhea. This illness rarely becomes serious, but it can keep you feeling unwell for days or even weeks.

What Are the Common Symptoms?

Watery diarrhea is the most common symptom people notice.

Other signs can include:

- *An upset stomach or cramps*
- *Bloating or extra gas*
- *Feeling sick to your stomach, or throwing up*
- *Feeling very tired*
- *Not feeling hungry, or losing weight without trying*
- *A mild fever*

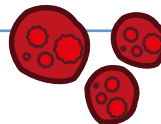
It typically takes around a week for symptoms to show up after you've been exposed, but it can take as few as two days or up to two weeks. Symptoms may improve temporarily before flaring up again. If left untreated, illness could last anywhere from a few days to over a month. Not everyone who picks up the germ feels sick – some people never notice they have it.

How Does It Spread?

This illness comes from swallowing food or water that's been in contact with someone else's infected waste. Right after leaving the body, the germ isn't contagious yet- it needs one to two weeks sitting in the environment before it can make the next person sick. That delay is why it almost never passes straight from one person to another. Here in the U.S., produce is usually to blame; past cases have pointed to items like berries, cilantro, basil, snow peas, green onions, and packaged salad blends. The germ also turns up more often in warmer regions of the world, so people traveling to those places face a somewhat higher risk.



Fact Sheet



What Can You Do to Prevent It?

A few everyday food habits can help cut your risk:

- Scrub your hands with soap and warm water for at least 20 seconds before and after you handle food.
- Make sure to rinse fresh produce under clean running water before you eat it – yes, even pieces you're about to peel – and scrub firmer items like melons with a dedicated produce brush. Do not use soap or bleach, only water..
- Peel away and toss the outermost layers of produce when you can – for leafy greens, that usually means removing the outer two or three leaves.
- Don't assume pre-washed or pre-cut produce is germ-free as factory washing doesn't always clear it out completely.
- Trim off any bruised or damaged spots before you eat.
- Cooking is your strongest defense when it's an option. Washing and everyday cleaners can't fully get rid of the germ, but heating food to at least 158°F (70°C) will destroy it.

No single step listed completely eliminates the germ.

The safest option is the combination of all steps.

Who Should Be Contacted if You Become Sick?

If diarrhea is present for more than a few days, or you notice any of the listed symptoms, check in with your doctor. Catching this particular germ takes a specific stool test – it's not something most labs screen for automatically, so your provider needs to order it by name. Treatment usually involves antibiotics. You might also hear from your local health department, since they sometimes reach out to ask what you'd eaten in the couple of weeks before you got sick as part of tracing where an outbreak came from.

Where Can I Learn More?

- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC): [cdc.gov/cyclosporiasis](https://www.cdc.gov/cyclosporiasis)
- U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA), Cyclospora: <https://www.fda.gov/food/foodborne-pathogens/cyclospora>
- FDA, Cyclosporiasis and Fresh Produce: [fda.gov/food/foodborne-pathogens/cyclosporiasis-and-fresh-produce](https://www.fda.gov/food/foodborne-pathogens/cyclosporiasis-and-fresh-produce)

For more information:

Joshua Dunne

Commercial Kitchen Manager
900 Leslie Blvd
Jefferson City, MO 65101
573-681-5015 | DunneJ@LincolnU.edu

Sujan Acharya, Ph.D.

Assistant Professor of Food Science
904 Chestnut Street
Jefferson City, MO 65101
573-681-5212 | AcharyaS@LincolnU.edu



National Institute of Food and Agriculture
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Lincoln University is an equal-opportunity employer and provider.