

Cyclosporiasis

Food Safety Best Practices

For Food Service Operations and Retail
Food Establishments

July 16, 2026

Maintaining strong food safety practices every day is the best defense against foodborne illness. The following recommendations reinforce the safe food handling practices already required by the Ohio Uniform Food Safety Code and highlight additional considerations during the current investigation into increased cases of cyclosporiasis.

Cyclospora cayetanensis is a microscopic parasite that causes an intestinal illness called **cyclosporiasis**. It is most commonly spread through contaminated food or water. In the U.S., cyclosporiasis cases have been linked to various types of fresh produce, especially during the summer months.

Why am I receiving this?

Wood County Health Department is sharing this information because cases of cyclosporiasis have increased in our region. While the source remains under investigation, fresh produce has been associated with previous outbreaks in the United States.

Restaurants and Commercial Kitchens should especially follow the steps below when preparing, processing, or serving raw produce:

Wrapped Produce Handling: Produce that comes wrapped does not necessarily mean it's ready to eat. Wrapped produce, such as English cucumbers, romaine hearts, and pears should be washed prior to eating or cooking—even if you plan to peel the produce.

Lettuce/leafy greens: Buy whole heads of lettuce (rather than prewashed, bagged lettuce or salad mixes), throw away the outer 2–3 layers of leaves and wash the inner leaves under running water. For leafy greens that can be cooked, cooking is the safest option.

Basil and Cilantro: Some herbs such as cilantro and basil may need extra rinsing. Wash thoroughly under running water, separating the leaves. Cooking is always the safest option.

Green onions: Trim the root end and remove the outer layer, wash thoroughly under running water. Safest when cooked.

Raspberries: The berry's bumpy surface makes it especially hard to clean as the parasite can hide in the tiny crevices. Safest when cooked (pies, jams etc.).

Snow peas: Wash under running water and rub the surface with light pressure. Cooking is the safest option.

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Continue following safe food-handling, including:

- Wash hands frequently, especially after using the restroom and before handling produce.
- **Thoroughly rinse** all fresh produce under clean running water before preparing or serving.
- Scrub firm produce, such as melons and cucumbers, with a clean produce brush.
- Separate raw produce from ready-to-eat foods.
- Wash and sanitize cutting boards, knives, utensils, prep tables, refrigeration units, and display cases.
- Refrigerate cut, peeled, or cooked fruits and vegetables as soon as possible, and store produce above and away from raw meat or seafood.
- Cooking is always the safest option. **Heating produce to at least 158°F (70°C) kills Cyclospora.**

Employee Health

Per Ohio Law, individuals working in sensitive occupations like **Food Handling, Childcare, and Direct Patient Care** are required to be excluded from work until certain criteria are met. These exclusions protect workers, customers, and patients from the spread of illness.

Because the exclusion criteria is unique for cyclosporiasis, getting tested is important if you have symptoms.

Exclusions for Food Handlers, Health Care Workers, Childcare Workers, and Childcare Attendees:

In accordance with the Ohio Administrative Code, any persons infected with cyclosporiasis are not permitted to work in the sensitive occupations named above until diarrhea has ceased and you been started on effective antibiotics.

More Information

CDC Cyclospora Page:

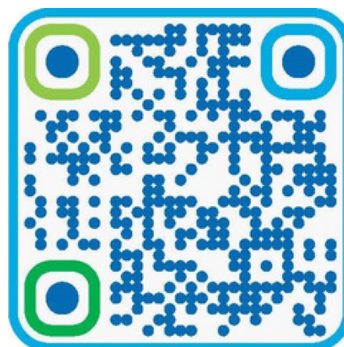
<https://www.cdc.gov/cyclosporiasis/about/index.html>

FDA Selecting and Serving Produce Safely:

<https://www.fda.gov/food/buy-store-serve-safe-food/selecting-and-serving-produce-safely>

Toledo Lucas County Health Department

<https://lucascountyhealth.com/cyclo/>



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