

HALTON REGION HEALTH DEPARTMENT
OFFICE OF THE ASSOCIATE MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH
TEL: 905-825-6000 FAX: 905-825-1444

TO: Halton Physicians
Medical Chiefs of Staff: Joseph Brant Hospital, Halton Healthcare (Oakville, Milton and Georgetown Hospitals)
Chairs of: Family Practice, Paediatrics, Internal Medicine, Emergency, Obstetrics and Gynaecology, Surgery
Chief of Laboratory Services and Infection Control Practitioners

POST IN: Emergency Department and Physicians Lounge

FROM: Dr. Joanna Oda, Associate Medical Officer of Health

DATE: August 20, 2019

RE: Increase in Locally acquired Cyclosporiasis

Ontario is experiencing an increase in the number of Cyclosporiasis cases. Between April 1 and August 6, 2019 there have been 113 locally acquired Cyclosporiasis cases reported throughout the province. In Halton, since July 1, 2019, there have been 20 cases, of which 18 had no travel outside of North America. Please consider testing for Cyclospora in patients with compatible symptoms.

What is Cyclosporiasis?

- A gastrointestinal illness caused by the parasite *Cyclospora cayetanensis*
- Common symptoms include frequent watery diarrhea, anorexia, fatigue, abdominal cramps, nausea, and myalgia
- Left untreated, symptoms typically last 6 to 7 weeks and can wax and wane in intensity
- Symptoms generally improve within 2 to 3 days of starting first-line treatment.

How is Cyclospora infection acquired?

- By ingesting food or water contaminated with the parasite when visiting an endemic country (e.g., in the Caribbean, South and Central America, South and South East Asia) or during annual spring/summer outbreaks of cyclosporiasis. The infection is unlikely to spread from person to person.
- Outbreaks of locally-acquired infections are often due to fresh produce, such as berries or herbs, imported from endemic countries.

Diagnosis and Treatment

- *Cyclospora* infection can be diagnosed by submitting a stool sample for ova and parasite (O&P) testing to your local laboratory or to the [Public Health Ontario Laboratory](#) using the [General Test Requisition form](#).
- [First-line treatment](#) is trimethoprim-sulfamethoxazole (TMP-SMX).

Additional Resources on Cyclosporiasis

Cyclospora infection: <https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/diseases/cyclosporiasis-cyclospora/health-professionals-cyclosporiasis-cyclospora.html>

Cyclosporiasis in Ontario, including links to testing information:

<http://www.publichealthontario.ca/en/BrowseByTopic/InfectiousDiseases/Pages/IDLandingPages/Cyclosporiasis.aspx>

Please report all suspected or confirmed cases of [Diseases of Public Health Significance](#) (formerly Reportable Diseases) to the Halton Region Health Department as soon as possible. Diseases marked * should be reported immediately by telephone (24 hours a day, 7 days a week) or fax (Mon-Fri, 8:30 am – 4:30 pm only). Other diseases can be reported the next working day. Call 311, 905-825-6000 or toll free at 1-866-442-5866. For general information, please visit halton.ca.

If any link provided in this memo does not work, please cut and paste it into your web browser.