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## Cyclosporiasis

### Definition:

Cyclosporiasis is caused by a parasite called *Cyclospora cayetanensis*. It infects the small intestine after being consumed in food or water that has been contaminated by infected stool.

### Signs and symptoms:

Symptoms include watery diarrhea with frequent, sometimes explosive, bowel movements. Other symptoms may include loss of appetite, weight loss, bloating, gas, stomach cramps, nausea, vomiting, fever, and fatigue.

### Transmission:

Transmission occurs through consuming food or water that has been contaminated with infected stool. This often occurs when fresh produce, such as fruit or vegetables, are not properly washed before eating. Cyclosporiasis is not found in commercially frozen or canned produce due to the processes involved and is generally not spread person-to-person. Cyclosporiasis is often found in tropical or subtropical regions, however it has recently become more common in the United States.

### Diagnosis:

Cyclosporiasis is diagnosed by clinical symptoms and laboratory tests.

### Role of the School Nurse:

#### Prevention

- Provide education to students and staff regarding good hand washing with soap and water
- Promote washing of fresh fruit and vegetables before eating
- Exclude symptomatic students and staff from school and school trips, especially swimming, until diarrhea resolves
- Provide education on good food safety practices

#### Treatment Recommendations

- If symptoms are noted, the child should be referred to his or her healthcare provider
- Treatment consists of antibiotics, taken for 7-10 days
- Non-specific supportive therapy, including hydration, is important

#### Exclusions

- Students should be excluded from school while symptomatic with diarrhea
- Educational modifications may be warranted in children with a positive diagnosis
- See Maine Food Code for exclusions for staff handling food

#### Reporting Requirements

- Cyclosporiasis is a nationally notifiable infectious disease. Cyclosporiasis is currently not a reportable infectious disease in Maine but may be reported as an “unusual disease”.

### Resources:

- Maine CDC Cyclosporiasis website (including fact sheet) <http://www.maine.gov/dhhs/mecdc/infectious-disease/epi/disease/cyclosporiasis.shtml>
- Maine Food Code: <http://www.maine.gov/dhhs/mecdc/environmental-health/el/rules.htm>
- Federal CDC Cyclosporiasis website <http://www.cdc.gov/parasites/cyclosporiasis/>
- Federal CDC Food Safety website <http://www.cdc.gov/foodsafety/>