

News Release

For Immediate Release

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Cyclospora Cases Reported in Southwest Nebraska

Southwest Nebraska Public Health Department (SWNPHD) has received reports of 2 cases of Cyclospora in the nine-county health district. Both cases are related to travel outside the health district. SWNPHD is working with Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) to determine if there are shared exposures linking these cases to the national outbreak. Cyclospora is an intestinal parasite that is typically spread through contaminated food or water, most commonly fresh fruits and vegetables.

Cyclosporiasis (the illness caused by cyclospora) is not spread from person to person, and the risk of severe disease is low. Symptoms usually develop about one week after exposure and include watery diarrhea, fatigue, loss of appetite, weight loss, bloating, stomach cramps, and nausea. Without treatment, it can last for weeks or longer, and symptoms may come and go. This illness is treated with antibiotics, rest, and hydration.

“Nebraskans who develop symptoms lasting more than three days should contact a healthcare provider,” says Dr. Timothy Tesmer, DHHS Chief Medical Officer. “Early diagnosis and treatment can help shorten the illness and reduce the risk of dehydration and other complications.”

As cyclosporiasis cases continue to rise nationwide, SWNPHD is reminding residents of the importance of routine food safety practices. It is possible this outbreak may be due to shredded bagged lettuce. However, there are signals that other cyclospora cluster outbreaks are occurring that involve other food items.

Reduce Your Risk

- Cook foods when possible. Heating food to at least 158°F kills the cyclospora parasite.
- Wash all fresh fruits and vegetables thoroughly under clean, running water before eating, cutting, or peeling them. Scrub firm produce such as melons and cucumbers with a clean produce brush.
- Clean and sanitize your hands, cutting boards, utensils, countertops, and other food preparation surfaces before and after handling fresh produce.
- Cut away any damaged or bruised areas before preparing or eating fruits and vegetables.
- Refrigerate cut, peeled, or cooked fruits and vegetables promptly.

If you get symptoms and test positive for cyclospora, SWNPHD may contact you to ask about what you ate in the two weeks before becoming sick, including any travel, to help determine the source of the illness.

For more information, visit [cdc.gov/cyclosporiasis](https://www.cdc.gov/cyclosporiasis). Southwest Nebraska Public Health Department serves Chase, Dundly, Frontier, Furnas, Hayes, Hitchcock, Keith, Perkins, and Red Willow counties. The website swhealth.ne.gov contains many resources and additional information helpful to prevent disease, promote and protect health. You can follow us on Facebook, Instagram, and You Tube.

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