Iowa Cyclospora Outbreak 2013

Outbreak Update 8.1.13

(new information is highlighted)

IDPH, CDC, Iowa Department of Inspections and Appeals, the State Hygienic Laboratory and local public health agencies are investigating an outbreak caused by *Cyclospora*.

- The epidemiologic investigation completed by local public health departments in Iowa and IDPH has implicated a prepackaged salad mix as the source of the outbreak. The food trace back investigation performed by DIA determined that at least 80 percent of these cases had been exposed to the same prepackaged salad mix.
    - As an example of the complexity of this investigation, over 100 restaurants and 80 grocery stores were patronized by cases during the time they could have been exposed to Cyclospora. Exposures to pre-packaged salad mix could have occurred at more than 50 possible sites (including more than 15 restaurants, more than 30 grocery stores and other possible sites).
    - The salad mix contained iceberg and romaine lettuce, carrots and red cabbage.
    - This salad mix is no longer in Iowa's food supply chain.
        - Onset dates of the illness suggest the ill people had eaten the contaminated food in mid-June. This is a very good indication the food which was the source of the outbreak has already been consumed or discarded, since fresh vegetables have a limited shelf life.
        - At no time was an Iowa-grown fruit or vegetable suspected to be the cause of the outbreak.
    - Bagged salads and all other vegetables are safe to eat.
    - Public Health encourages Iowans to make fruits and vegetables part of their daily diet. It is always a good idea to wash all fresh fruits and vegetables thoroughly before eating.

- As of today, 146 cases of Cyclospora infections have been reported to IDPH. Because the number of new cases identified has declined dramatically, IDPH will discontinue daily case count updates as of today, August 1. Weekly case counts will be posted each Thursday at 10:00 a.m at www.idph.state.ia.us/EHI/Issue.aspx?issue=Cyclospora Outbreak Investigation&pg=Cyclospora Case Count Updates. Daily status updates will also be discontinued; but will be posted as needed.
    - IDPH continues to receive reports of confirmed cases of Cyclospora infection and interview those who are ill, but numbers are decreasing.
    - *Cyclospora* is a rare parasite.
    - People become infected with *Cyclospora* by consuming food or water contaminated with the parasite.
- IDPH has not released the name of the salad mixture brand, or locations where it was purchased or eaten because of confidentiality mandated by Iowa state law.
    - Iowa Code Section 139A.3(2)'c' requires IDPH to prevent the identification of any business involved in a disease outbreak, and authorizes release of the identity of a business to the public only 'when the state epidemiologist or director of public health determines such a release of information is necessary for the protection of the public.'

    - Because the vast majority of illnesses occurred in mid-June and the limited shelf life of fresh produce, IDPH and DIA determined the implicated salad mix was no longer in the Iowa food supply chain.
    - Thus, there is no ongoing threat to the public health which would require the identification of a particular brand, store, or restaurant where the salad mixture was available. In addition, these sites could not have taken any action to prevent contamination of the mixture since it came pre-packaged and ready-to-eat.
    - If it had been determined the source of the outbreak was still in the food supply chain, or that a business was refusing to take some action necessary to protect the public's health, IDPH would inform Iowans about the exact product or source in order to protect their health. In such a case, a recall of the item would be facilitated by the FDA. Neither action was necessary in this outbreak.

- CDC updates on the Cyclosporiasis outbreak, which includes Iowa and several other states, can be found at www.cdc.gov/parasites/cyclosporiasis/outbreaks/investigation-2013.html.

- *Cyclospora* infection causes a watery diarrhea that lasts an average of 57 days, if untreated.
    - Specific laboratory testing (not commonly ordered) must be done to detect *Cyclospora*.
    - Specific treatment (not typically used to treat more common diarrheal illnesses) can be prescribed.

- If you are experiencing diarrhea, or have recently had a long bout with diarrhea, you should contact your health care provider and see if you should be tested for *Cyclospora* infection.
    - Additional symptoms of cyclosporiasis (the infection caused by *Cyclospora*) include:
        - Watery diarrhea
        - Fatigue (severe tiredness)
        - Loss of appetite
        - Weight loss
        - Bloating
        - Increased gas
        - Stomach cramps
        - Nausea
        - Vomiting
        - Muscle aches
        - Low-grade fever