Iowa Cyclospora Outbreak 2013

Outbreak Update 7.17.13

(new information is highlighted)

- IDPH, CDC, the State Hygienic Laboratory and local public health agencies are investigating an outbreak caused by *Cyclospora*.
    - As of today, 87 cases of Cyclospora infections have been reported to IDPH. Case counts are updated at approximately 10:00 a.m. each day.
    - The number of cases reported is decreasing.
    - *Cyclospora* is a rare parasite.
    - Previous outbreaks have been associated with fresh produce (fresh fruits and vegetables)
    - People become infected with *Cyclospora* by consuming food or water contaminated with the parasite.

- The source of this outbreak is unknown at this time.
    - 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.
    - IDPH 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.
    - Cyclospora illness is typically traced to consumption of fresh fruits and vegetables contaminated with the parasite; this investigation currently indicates fresh vegetables, not fruit, may be the source of illness.
    - IDPH is working with local public health agencies to interview individuals who are ill to determine if there is a common food exposure that would indicate the source of illness.
    - Cluster investigations continue, which ask questions of both the ill person and their family and friends who are not ill, to determine what the well people did not eat.

- *Cyclospora* infection causes a watery diarrhea that lasts an average of 57 days, if untreated.
    - Most of the illnesses in this outbreak began in mid to late June. Many people report still being ill and some have had relapses.

- There is treatment (medicine) available to treat *Cyclospora* infection.
    - 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