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No Reservations

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Cyclospora Outbreak In Iowa and Nebraska

Prepackaged salad mix has been pinpointed as the source of an outbreak of cyclospora -- an intestinal illness tied to a rare type of parasite -- that has sickened multiple people in Iowa and Nebraska, stated health authorities in those states.

More than 100 Iowans and 78 Nebraskans have fallen ill with the disease since last month, those states' health departments said. Five people have been hospitalized as a result in Nebraska, where health officials say new cases of cyclospora are reported daily.

Investigations commonly led authorities in both states to conclude that a bagged blend of iceberg and romaine lettuce, red cabbage and carrots is to blame, with Nebraska noting the mix had been prewashed.

State and federal authorities are still trying to determine exactly where the product was sold or under what brand name. The Nebraska alert noted that it "came through national distribution channels" and that "locally grown produce is not part of this outbreak."

Iowa authorities found that about 80% of those who fell ill had prepackaged salad, but the allegedly tainted product was apparently no longer on grocers' shelves by the time investigators were alerted.

The upside of this delay? "Iowans should continue eating salads as the implicated prepackaged salad mix is no longer in the state's food supply chain," said Steven Mandernach, the head of that state's food and consumer safety bureau.

What's happening in Iowa and Nebraska may be linked to 122 cyclospora cases in Texas, that state's department of health services said. As of July 30th, authorities had not singled out a common source for the Lone Star State's outbreak, which is largely centered in and around Dallas and Fort Worth.

The U.S. Centers of Disease Control and Prevention has been collaborating with health officials in numerous states since late June trying to pin down what's causing the rash of cyclospora cases.

Article by: Greg Botelho and Carma Hassan , CNN

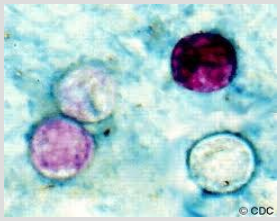
Pathogen Spotlight: Cyclospora

Cyclospora cayetanensis is a parasite that has been found in contaminated water and has been associated with produce irrigated or washed with contaminated water. It has also been found in the feces of people infected with the parasite. Food handler's can transfer the parasite after handling the food from their fingers containing feces.

Food most commonly associated with this parasite is produce irrigated or washed with water containing the parasite.



The symptoms commonly associated with Cyclosporiasis are mild to severe nausea, abdominal cramps, mild fever, and diarrhea alternating with constipation. These symptoms are more severe in people with weakened immune systems.



Cyclospora

It is critical to purchase fish from approved reputable suppliers. Food handlers with diarrhea must be excluded from the restaurant. It is very important for food handlers to wash their hands properly and after every possibility of contamination. This will minimize the risk of cross-contamination.

Mexican Restaurant, Humble, TX. — June 2013

A Salmonella outbreak in Humble, TX has prompted health officials to close this restaurant. A number of people contracted Salmonella poisoning after eating at the restaurant and some of them were hospitalized. Harris County public health officials say they closed the restaurant when failure to address repeated food safety violations resulted in illnesses. Over the last two months, the restaurant had been cited for violations including: improper cooling of food, improper temperature of cooked food being held, failure by employees to use good hygiene practices, cross contamination, and food contact surfaces and utensils that were not cleaned and maintained properly.

http://foodpoisoningbulletin.com

Japanese Restaurant, Lexington, KY. — May 2013

A Lexington restaurant was closed on Wednesday after the Fayette County Health Department gave them a 59 on their health inspection. According to the Fayette County Health Department the biggest issues were cleanliness and food handling. "A lot of employee practice issues, gloving, food storage issues, thawing, how they're preparing the food," said Luke Mathis with Lexington Environmental Health. The restaurant will remain closed until at least Tuesday when the Health Department will have a conference with the owners on what they need to do to get the restaurant back up to acceptable standards. "I can only think of few other times that we would close an establishment due to score," Mathis said. "Most of the time it would be due to an eminent health hazard, it is unusual for an establishment to score this low." Their prior health inspection was on December 12, 2012. They received a 99 at that inspection.

http://www.wkyt.com

Argentinean Restaurant, Ybor City, FL. — June 2013

The restaurant was shut down as an emergency closure June 25th after a state inspector documented 26 violations, six considered high priority. Among the issues were seafood left out thawing at room temperature; food not properly date marked; roach activity with 30 to 40 live roaches found on food shelves; live flies; a broken window in the kitchen; and a torn screen door with vermin present. But perhaps the biggest concern was the presence of toxic substances, including consumer insecticides in close proximity to the food. The state inspector found a banned "tracking powder" insecticide inside the kitchen according to state records. "What happens to the powder that was on the floor? It ends up on the cockroaches feet, and where does the roach go? Into the food," said a local food safety expert. "Having pesticides in the food service establishment is not only prohibited but just a bad idea. That stuff enters the food chain it's going to make someone real, real sick." Toxic items and other issues were repeat violations previously written up by the state. "We know now better for the future. When they say you need to change this, let's get it done real quick because unfortunately, [the inspector] wasn't playing this time. She closed the place," said the owner, who promises the restaurant's issues are now corrected. "The shelf that was holding the onions and potatoes was really close to the chemicals. We got new shelving and a new company that comes in and does all the insecticide. We're not doing it ourselves no more, that way we can avoid that issue."

http://www.wtsp.com

Fast Food Restaurant, Temple Terrace, FL. — June 2013

The fast food restaurant was closed June 19th after the inspector documented 10 violations, considered high priority. Among the issues were temperature violations on the cooked meats, not being held at a hot enough temperature. The state also found roaches, both dead and alive, by the mop sink near the bread, in a base board, one with an egg sack under the drive-thru cash register, and 35-50 live roaches in the sub basement area. http://www.wtsp.com

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