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South Carolina
Health Alert Network

This is an official

DHEC Health Advisory

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Increase in Watery Diarrhea Cases in Upstate Region

Summary

DHEC is investigating recently reported cases of watery diarrhea in a community in the Upstate Region and is working to identify the source of these infections. Several of these cases have been confirmed as cyclosporiasis, a parasitic infection. In the cases under investigation, symptom onsets have occurred since July 15, 2014.

DHEC is advising clinicians to consider the diagnosis of cyclosporiasis in patients with clinically compatible illnesses, to perform confirmatory diagnostic testing when possible and to promptly report cases to DHEC.

Guidance for clinicians

Symptoms

The time between infection and onset of symptoms is usually about 1-2 weeks. *Cyclospora* infects the small intestine (bowel) and usually causes watery diarrhea, with frequent, sometimes explosive, bowel movements. Other common symptoms include loss of appetite, weight loss, stomach cramps/pain, bloating, increased gas, nausea, and fatigue. Vomiting, body aches, headache, fever, and other flu-like symptoms may be noted. Some infected individuals are asymptomatic.

Transmission and Risk Factors

People become infected with *Cyclospora* by ingesting the infective form (sporulated oocysts) of the parasite. This most commonly occurs when food or water contaminated with feces is consumed. Direct person-to-person transmission is unlikely.

In the United States, foodborne outbreaks of cyclosporiasis since the mid-1990s have been linked to various types of imported fresh produce, including raspberries, basil, snow peas, and mesclun lettuce; no commercially frozen or canned produce has been implicated. U.S. cases of infection also have occurred in persons who traveled to *Cyclospora*-endemic areas. Travelers should be aware that treatment of water or food with chlorine or iodine is unlikely to kill *Cyclospora* oocysts.

Testing

Testing for *Cyclospora* is not routinely done in most U.S. laboratories, even when testing for parasites is requested for stool specimens. Therefore, if clinically suspicious, health care providers should specifically request testing for *Cyclospora*.

Treatment

Trimethoprim-sulfamethoxazole (TMP-SMX), or Bactrim*, Septra*, or Cotrim*, is the treatment of choice. The typical regimen for immunocompetent adults is TMP 160 mg plus SMX 800 mg (one double-strength tablet), orally, twice a day, for 7-10 days. HIV-infected patients may need longer courses of therapy.

No highly effective alternatives have been identified for persons who are allergic to (or are intolerant of) TMP-SMX. Approaches to consider for persons who cannot take sulfa include observation and symptomatic treatment, use of an antibiotic whose effectiveness against *Cyclospora* is based on limited data, or desensitization to TMP-SMX. The latter approach should be considered only for selected patients who require treatment, have been evaluated by an allergist, and do not have a life-threatening allergy. Some evidence suggests that ciprofloxacin (Cipro) or nitazoxanide (Alinia) might be effective.

Anecdotal or unpublished data suggest that the following drugs are ineffective: albendazole, trimethoprim (when used as a single agent), azithromycin, nalidixic acid, tinidazole, metronidazole, quinacrine, tetracycline, doxycycline, and diloxanide furoate.

Reporting Cases

Cyclosporiasis is reportable within 72 hours of identification of a case. Call your local health department with questions, or to report a cyclosporiasis case. Cases may also be reported to DHEC via an electronic report or by mailing an 1129 Disease Reporting Form in an envelope marked confidential to the regional public health office in the county where the patient resides.

DHEC contact information for reportable diseases and reporting requirements

Reporting of cyclosporiasis is consistent with South Carolina Law requiring the reporting of diseases and conditions to your state or local public health department. (State Law # 44-29-10 and Regulation # 61-20) as per the DHEC 2013 List of Reportable Conditions available at:
http://www.scdhec.gov/health/disease/reportables.htm

Federal HIPAA legislation allows disclosure of protected health information, without consent of the individual, to public health authorities to collect and receive such information for the purpose of preventing or controlling disease. (HIPAA 45 CFR §164.512).

Regional Public Health Offices – 2014

Mail or call reports to the Epidemiology Office in each Public Health Region.

LOW COUNTRY PUBLIC HEALTH REGION

Berkeley, Charleston, Dorchester
4050 Bridge View Drive, Suite 600
N. Charleston, SC 29405
Phone: (843) 953-0043
Fax: (843) 953-0051
Nights / Weekends: (843) 441-1091

Beaufort, Colleton, Hampton, Jasper
219 S. Lemacks Street
Walterboro, SC 29488
Phone: (843) 549-1516
Fax: (843) 549-6845
Nights / Weekends: (843) 441-1091

Allendale, Bamberg, Calhoun, Orangeburg
932 Holly Street
Holly Hill, SC 29059
Phone: (803) 300-2270
Fax: (843) 549-6845
Nights / Weekends: (843) 441-1091

MIDLANDS PUBLIC HEALTH REGION

Kershaw, Lexington, Newberry, Richland
2000 Hampton Street
Columbia, SC 29204
Phone: (803) 576-2749
Fax: (803) 576-2993
Nights / Weekends**: (**888) 801-1046

Chester, Fairfield, Lancaster, York
PO Box 817
1833 Pageland Highway
Lancaster, SC 29720
Phone: (803) 286-9948
Fax: (803) 286-5418
Nights / Weekends: (888) 801-1046

Aiken, Barnwell, Edgefield, Saluda
222 Beaufort Street, NE
Aiken, SC 29801
Phone: (803) 642-1618
Fax: (803) 643-8386
Nights / Weekends: (888) 801-1046

PEE DEE PUBLIC HEALTH REGION

Chesterfield, Darlington, Dillon, Florence, Marlboro, Marion
145 E. Cheves Street
Florence, SC 29506
Phone: (843) 661-4830
Fax: (843) 661-4859
Nights / Weekends: (843) 915-8845

Clarendon, Lee, Sumter
PO Box 1628
105 North Magnolia Street
Sumter, SC 29150
Phone: (803) 773-5511
Fax: (803) 775-9941
Nights/Weekends: (843) 915-8845

Georgetown, Horry, Williamsburg
1931 Industrial Park Road
Conway, SC 29526-5482
Phone: (843) 915-8804
Fax: (843) 915-6502
Nights/Weekends: (843) 915-8845

UPSTATE PUBLIC HEALTH REGION

Anderson, Oconee
220 McGee Road
Anderson, SC 29625
Phone: (864) 260-5801
Fax: (864) 260-5623
Nights / Weekends: (866) 298-4442

Abbeville, Greenwood, Laurens, McCormick
1736 S. Main Street
Greenwood, SC 29646
Phone: (864) 227-5947
Fax: (864) 953-6313
Nights / Weekends: (866) 298-4442

Cherokee , Greenville, Pickens
PO Box 2507
200 University Ridge
Greenville, SC 29602-2507
Phone: (864) 372-3133
Fax: (864) 282-4373
Nights / Weekends: (866) 298-4442

UPSTATE PUBLIC HEALTH REGION (continued)

Spartanburg, Union
PO Box 2507
200 University Ridge
Greenville, SC 29602-2507
Phone: (864) 372-3133
Fax: (864) 282-4373
Nights / Weekends: (866) 298-4442

DHEC Bureau of Disease Control

Division of Acute Disease Epidemiology
1751 Calhoun Street
Box 101106
Columbia, SC 29211
Phone: (803) 898-0861
Fax: (803) 898-0897
Nights / Weekends: 1-888-847-0902

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South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control

www.scdhec.gov

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Health Alert	Conveys the highest level of importance; warrants immediate action or attention.
Health Advisory	Provides important information for a specific incident or situation; may not require immediate action.
Health Update	Provides updated information regarding an incident or situation; unlikely to require immediate action.
Info Service	Provides general information that is not necessarily considered to be of an emergent nature.