Increase in locally-acquired cyclosporiasis in Ontario

Ontario has experienced a significant increase in locally-acquired *Cyclospora* infections. There were 36 locally-acquired cyclosporiasis cases reported in Ontario between April 1 and July 19, 2018. Your assistance in promptly diagnosing suspected cases of cyclosporiasis and reporting them to the Region of Peel - Public Health for further investigation will support prompt treatment of patients to lessen duration of symptoms, as well as assist with identifying the source of illness.

Cyclosporiasis is an infection of the small bowel caused by the parasite *Cyclospora cayetanensis*, commonly characterized by frequent, watery diarrhea. Other symptoms include anorexia, fatigue, abdominal cramps, nausea, and myalgia. Left untreated, symptoms typically last 6 to 7 weeks and vary in intensity.

People are infected by ingesting food or water contaminated with the parasite. Direct person-to-person transmission is not likely. The parasite is found in tropical and sub-tropical climates; cases in Ontario are usually travel-related when visiting an endemic country (e.g., in the Caribbean, South and Central America, South and East Asia) or associated with an imported food source.

Most outbreaks in Ontario occur in the spring and summer, with locally-acquired infections likely due to fresh produce such as berries or herbs that are imported from *Cyclospora*-endemic countries.

Diagnosis:
*Cyclospora* infection can be diagnosed by a stool ova and parasite (O&P) examination. If patients present with cyclosporiasis-compatible symptoms between now and the end of summer, please request testing for stool parasites on the Public Health Ontario Laboratory General Test Requisition form and specify the request is to test for *Cyclospora*.

Treatment:
First line treatment is trimethoprim-sulfamethoxazole (TMP-SMX). Symptoms typically improve within 2 to 3 days of starting a course of TMP-SMX treatment.

To report suspected or confirmed cases of cyclosporiasis please call the Region of Peel - Public Health at 905-799-7700.

Additional Information on cyclosporiasis:

Additional information on cyclosporiasis in Ontario, including details on testing:
http://www.publichealthontario.ca/en/BrowseByTopic/InfectiousDiseases/Pages/IDLandingPages/Cyclosporiasis.aspx