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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**ODH Director Dr. Vanderhoff: Take Precautions,
As Cyclosporiasis Can Be a Serious Illness**

Ohioans encouraged to wash fruits and vegetables thoroughly

(COLUMBUS) — Ohio Department of Health (ODH) Director Bruce Vanderhoff, MD, MBA, is urging Ohioans to take extra precautions when handling fruits and vegetables to help prevent cyclosporiasis, a gastrointestinal disease that has sickened hundreds of people across multiple states recently, including Ohio.

As of July 2, ODH is reporting 177 cyclosporiasis cases in the state in 2026. Of those, 171 cases occurred in June, mostly since June 20.

Twenty-eight Ohioans have been hospitalized. Cyclosporiasis is not typically life-threatening but can cause watery, and sometimes explosive, diarrhea.

“Fortunately, there have been no deaths in Ohio, as is consistent with our past experiences with this illness,” Dr. Vanderhoff said. “Nevertheless, this is a serious illness that can cause dehydration and require people to seek emergency medical care, and it should be taken seriously.”

ODH and local health departments are working with neighboring state partners and federal partners to investigate this outbreak. This includes conducting interviews and traceback investigations to help identify any potential common exposures.

The illness is caused by a microscopic parasite -- *Cyclospora cayetanensis*, also known as *Cyclospora*. The disease generally is transmitted by eating contaminated produce.

At this point, no common source has been identified and the investigation is ongoing.

The most common symptom is watery diarrhea. Bloating or cramping, or loss of appetite can also occur. If not treated, symptoms may seem to get better and then return one or more times. Ohioans who experience these symptoms should contact their healthcare provider.

Cyclosporiasis can be treated with antibiotics. Getting rest and plenty of fluids also are important to recovery.

To help prevent cyclosporiasis:

- People should wash their hands with soap and water before and after preparing raw fruit and vegetables.
- Fruits and vegetables should be washed thoroughly under running water, and firm fruit and vegetables, like melons, should be scrubbed with a clean produce brush.
- Cut, peeled, or cooked fruits and vegetables should be eaten or refrigerated promptly.

A breakdown of cases by county, as of July 2, can be found below.

- Allen: 1
- Ashland: 7

- Auglaize: 1
- Carroll: 3
- Clark: 2
- Clermont: 1
- Crawford: 7
- Cuyahoga: 4
- Fairfield: 3
- Franklin: 10
- Fulton: 5
- Greene: 3
- Hamilton: 5
- Henry: 2
- Holmes: 1
- Jackson: 2
- Jefferson: 1
- Knox: 1
- Lake: 4
- Lawrence: 1
- Licking: 7
- Lorain: 4
- Lucas: 30
- Mahoning: 2
- Marion: 1
- Medina: 2
- Montgomery: 4
- Morrow: 2

- Ottawa: 2
- Pickaway: 2
- Portage: 1
- Preble: 1
- Richland: 3
- Ross: 4
- Sandusky: 2
- Seneca: 2
- Stark: 8
- Summit: 3
- Tuscarawas: 1
- Warren: 1
- Williams: 1
- Wood: 20
- Wyandot: 10

- TOTAL: 177

About the Ohio Department of Health

The Ohio Department of Health's mission is advancing the health and well-being of all Ohioans. ODH is transforming the state's public health system through unique partnerships and funding streams, implementing data-driven, evidence-based solutions. For more, visit the [Ohio Department of Health website](#), which offers a range of public health information, tools, and resources.