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Cyclospora Outbreak Continues to Grow in North Texas

08/6/2013 | by Bradford Pearson | [+](#) Share Post

Twenty-seven cases of the Cyclospora infection have now been reported in Dallas County this year, more than double the number of cases during the preceding 12 years, county health and human services officials announced Monday.

More than 130 cases have been reported statewide, and the outbreak may possibly be related to a multi-state Cyclospora outbreak in Iowa and Nebraska. On August 2, the United States Centers for Disease Control received results of an FDA investigation tracing the Iowa-Nebraska infection to a Mexican salad-mix provider, Taylor Farms de Mexico. The salads were served at Red Lobster and Olive Garden restaurants. The company produced 48 million servings of salads in June, distributing them to thousands of restaurants in the Midwest and eastern United States.

“We care deeply about the health and welfare of our customers and are absolutely committed to ensuring every salad we produce is great tasting, healthy, wholesome and, most importantly, safe,” the company [said in a statement Saturday](#). “This is why Taylor Farms de Mexico assesses and tests all water sources, raw product fields; every lot, every day for any risk to our valued customers’ products. We are redoubling and enhancing our testing and scrutiny in these areas to further assure food safety.”

Past outbreaks in the United States have been associated with consumption of imported

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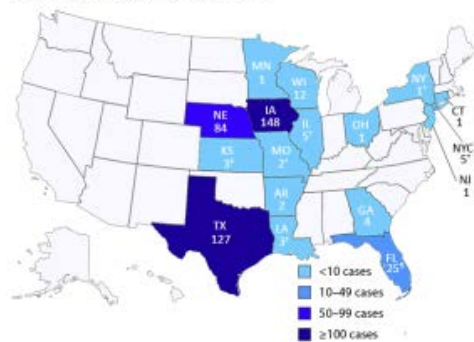
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fresh produce as well, but there is still no definitive link between the Iowa-Nebraska infection and the Texas one.

“That hasn’t been confirmed, no,” said Dallas County Health and Human Services Director Zachary Thompson. “The state will make the actual confirmation based on the information they gather.”

Cyclosporiasis cases notified to CDC, by state*



Cyclospora outbreak numbers from the CDC, as of Aug. 2.

The national investigation is ongoing and collaborative. The CDC’s initial efforts included providing scientific consultation to Iowa and Nebraska during early stages of the outbreak. By July 16, as cases were reported from other states, the CDC began leading a multi-state epidemiologic investigation, including coordination and analysis of data from state and local health departments and laboratory confirmation of cases. During this and other multi-state foodborne disease outbreaks, the CDC serves as the lead coordinator to help

define the size and extent of the outbreaks and to identify the causes.

Symptoms of cyclosporiasis usually begin two to 14 days after ingestion of the parasite in contaminated food or water. Profuse diarrhea can last weeks to months, and may relapse. Additional symptoms may include anorexia, nausea, vomiting, increased gas and low-grade fever. Drug treatment is available for people infected with cyclosporiasis, and those with compromised immune systems may need longer courses of therapy.

“To decrease the risk of eating fresh produce it is important to thoroughly rinse your fruits and vegetables several times,” DCHHS medical director Dr. Christopher Perkins said in a statement. “Even when cooking vegetables it is critical to clean them beforehand.”

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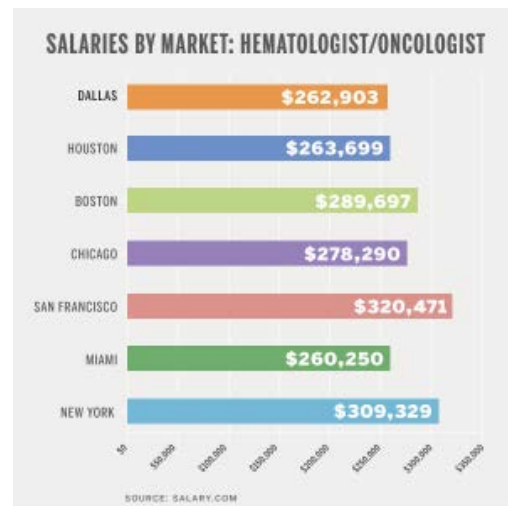
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