



Hidalgo County Commissioners Court

Richard F. Cortez
County Judge

David L. Fuentes
Commissioner, Precinct 1

Eduardo "Eddie" Cantu
Commissioner, Precinct 2

Joe M. Flores
Commissioner, Precinct 3

Ellie Torres
Commissioner, Precinct 4

**OFFICE OF
COUNTY JUDGE
RICHARD F. CORTEZ**

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NEWS ADVISORY

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Monday, Aug. 26, 2019

County health officials warn of foodborne illness outbreak

EDINBURG – Hidalgo County Health and Human Services has seen an increase in a foodborne illness related to contaminated produce and food products over the past six weeks.

Cyclosporiasis is a gastrointestinal illness caused by the cyclospora parasite, found in contaminated produce and food products. Cyclosporiasis is not airborne, but can be transmitted through the fecal (stool) of infected persons, said Health Department Chief Operating Officer Eduardo "Eddie" Olivarez.

"Hidalgo County has received more than 70 reports from laboratories and healthcare providers over the past six weeks," Olivarez said. "The easy fix to avoid this illness is to make sure you wash your hands, wash all your fruits and vegetables, and properly store the food."

Cyclosporiasis can include the following symptoms:

- Watery diarrhea (most common)
- Loss of appetite
- Weight loss
- Cramping
- Bloating
- Increased gas
- Nausea
- Fatigue

"When you or a loved one experiences diarrhea, or when caring for others, such as in child/adult day cares, nursing homes, or home health, proper hand hygiene is essential," Olivarez said.

To prevent Cyclosporiasis, remember to **Wash, Prepare, and Store.**

Wash: Wash hands with soap and warm water before and after handling or preparing meats, fruits, and vegetables. Wash cutting boards, dishes, utensils, and counter tops with disinfectant soap and hot water before and after the preparation of raw meat, poultry, and seafood products.

- MORE -

Hidalgo County is home to one of the fastest growing regions in the nation. We provide health and justice to the over 800,000 residents of our county. We strive to be accessible and responsive to our citizens by providing excellent public service through the values of leadership, transparency, fairness, collaboration, respect and fiscal responsibility. Follow our social media feed at www.co.hidalgo.tx.us/followus



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Prepare: Wash all fruits and vegetables thoroughly under running water before eating, cutting, or cooking. Scrub firm fruits and vegetables, such as melons and cucumbers, with a clean produce brush. Do not cross contaminate vegetables with raw meat.

Store: Refrigerate cut, peeled, or cooked fruits and vegetables as soon as possible, or within two hours. Store fruits and vegetables away from raw meat, poultry, and seafood.

If you are experiencing symptoms, follow-up with your healthcare provider to get tested. For more information on Cyclosporiasis, visit:

<https://www.cdc.gov/parasites/cyclosporiasis/index.html> and for more information on produce safety, visit:

<https://www.texasagriculture.gov/Portals/0/Files/FarmFreshFriday/Food%20Safety/ProduceSafety-RackCards.pdf>

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Note to News Media: Eddie Olivarez will be available for interviews (on camera or telephone) from 2 to 3 p.m. today (Monday, Aug. 26) in his office, located at 1304 S. 25th Ave. in Edinburg. You can reach him at (956) 383-8858.

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