

Cyclospora & Iceberg Lettuce: What Operators Should Take From This Outbreak

Verified July 27, 2026 · Investigation ongoing — figures move daily and each one below is dated to its source

01 · AT A GLANCE — THE LETTUCE-LINKED OUTBREAK

1,947 CASES	9 STATES	98+ HOSPITALIZED	0 DEATHS
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Onset window June 22–July 20 · Source: CDC investigation update, July 24

02 · WHAT HAPPENED

- CDC and FDA linked the outbreak to shredded iceberg lettuce served at restaurants across nine states: IL, IN, KS, KY, MI, OH, OK, PA, and WV.
- FDA’s traceback converged on a single supplier in central Mexico. **Taylor Farms de Mexico** voluntarily recalled all iceberg lettuce sourced from that region on July 17; the company reports the recall is complete.
- Michigan reviewed food exposure details from 190 people who ate at those locations — 90% reported eating iceberg lettuce.
- The chain had already pulled fresh produce from the affected states on July 9, about a week before the public link was made.

03 · THE RECALL, AND HOW FAR IT REACHED

WHAT Shredded iceberg lettuce & salad mixes containing iceberg, from central Mexico	RETAIL Marketside-brand product at Walmart, at least 15 states	FOODSERVICE Distributed to customers in 27 states	27 STATES REACHED
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If you buy shredded iceberg or salad mixes containing iceberg, this is your question — regardless of what sign is on your building. Confirm with your distributor rather than assuming you are unaffected.

Zoom out, but don’t add the numbers up. This lettuce-linked outbreak (1,947 cases) is one slice of a much bigger national season: roughly 11,500 cyclosporiasis cases across 41 states so far — versus 249 at this point in 2025. State dashboards add a third lens (Michigan 8,176; NW Ohio 2,029). All three use different case definitions and update on different schedules — treat them as separate counts, not a sum.

“Not all locations in these states received shredded iceberg lettuce from the same supplier.”

— CDC INVESTIGATION UPDATE

Same brand, same states — and some locations had the implicated product while others did not. Nothing about the menu, the region, or the sign on the building distinguished them. The supply records did.

04 • THREE CONTROLS, AND WHAT EACH ONE ACTUALLY DOES

Sanitizer

NOT EFFECTIVE

Unlikely to be killed by routine chemical disinfection — no EPA-registered disinfectant works against it, including chlorine.

Washing

HELPS, DOESN'T SOLVE

Clean running water removes some oocysts — the recommended baseline, even on pre-washed produce. Risk reduction, not elimination.

Cooking

WORKS ABOVE 158°F

158°F (70°C) is expected to inactivate the parasite — above most minimums your kitchen already works to.

Does your cook step clear 158°F?	Your minimum	Clears it?
Poultry, stuffing, reheated TCS food	165°F	Yes
Ground meat, ground fish	155°F	No
Whole cuts, seafood, eggs to order	145°F	No
Cooked vegetables & grains held hot	135°F	No

“We cook it” isn’t automatic reassurance — a vegetable held at 135°F hasn’t reached the threshold, and produce added after cooking was never heated at all.

05 • WHERE YOUR EXPOSURE SITS

Station	Items to review
Cold station & salads	Leafy greens, cut vegetables, composed salads
Garnish & finishing	Cilantro, basil, parsley added after cooking
Cold sides & desserts	Fresh berries, uncooked fruit
Raw produce	Sprouts, crudité, snow peas
Self-service	Salad bars, grab-and-go, buffet cold items

Past U.S. outbreaks have been linked to raspberries, basil, cilantro, snow peas, and lettuce, per FDA.

Most sit on the **FDA Food Traceability List**, so lot-level records are a legal requirement (FSMA 204): leafy greens, fresh herbs, melons, tomatoes, cucumbers, peppers, sprouts, fresh-cut produce, refrigerated deli salads. Whole berries and whole snow peas are not on the list.

06 • SIX ACTIONS, IN ORDER

- 1 **Check the recall** against your inventory and distributor — shredded iceberg and salad mixes containing iceberg, from central Mexico.

2 **Map supplier and lot** to your locations. If you can’t answer today, that’s the finding.

3 **Capture lot codes at receiving**, starting now — the habit that turns the next traceback into a lookup.
- 4 **Stop treating produce wash as a kill step.** Keep washing thoroughly — be clear with your team on what it actually accomplishes.

5 **Reconsider raw produce items** for the rest of the season (CDC: May–August). The calculation differs for healthcare, senior living, and K-12.

6 **Watch the primary sources** — the CDC outbreak page and FDA advisory. Additional states may still be added.

07 • FOUR THINGS TO KNOW

Not person to person

Oocysts need 1–2 weeks in the environment to become infectious.

Slow, relapsing onset

Symptoms start ~1 week after exposure (2–14 days); untreated illness can persist a month or more.

~6 weeks of lag

Time to confirm a case belongs to an outbreak — counts describe the past and will keep rising.

Underdiagnosed

Routine stool testing may miss it; CDC has asked clinicians to test for it specifically.

THE QUESTION TO BE READY FOR

Which of our locations received product from that supplier, in which lots, and where did it go?

One of two answers: a lookup that takes minutes, or a phone call to every store. The difference is decided months earlier, at the receiving door.

Read the full analysis: [Cyclospora and Iceberg Lettuce: What Operators Should Take From This Outbreak →](#)

BOHA! by TransAct · Cyclospora & Iceberg Lettuce Operator Quick Reference. Summarizes publicly available CDC and FDA information for foodservice operators, verified July 27, 2026. CDC conducts outbreak surveillance and reporting; FDA conducts traceback investigations and maintains the Food Traceability List; state and local health authorities enforce food safety requirements in your jurisdiction. Case counts move daily — confirm current figures against CDC and FDA before acting.