

# State Department of Agriculture and Markets and Department of Health Urge New Yorkers to Heed FDA Advisory Regarding Basil

## FDA Issues Nationwide Advisory on Imported Basil from Siga Logistics

### Product Potentially Linked to Multiple Cases of Cyclosporiasis in New York and Other States

ALBANY, N.Y. (July 25, 2019) - The State Department of Agriculture and Markets and the Department of Health today urged New Yorkers to not eat fresh basil imported from Siga Logistics S. de R.L de C.V of Mexico following the release of the [US Food and Drug Administration's \(FDA\) nationwide advisory](#), which has potentially linked the herb to cases of Cyclosporiasis illness in New York and other states. The FDA is advising consumers who have basil in their home that originated from this distributor to not eat it and throw it away, even if some of it was eaten and no one has gotten sick. The FDA is also urging retailers and restaurants not to serve or sell basil from the company until further notice.

**NYS Department of Agriculture and Markets Commissioner Richard A. Ball said,** "To protect consumers from this foodborne illness, we are urging New York families, retailers, grocers and restaurants to adhere to FDA's recommendations by checking the source of the basil and making sure it did not come from Siga Logistics in Mexico. We will continue to work with our state and federal partners on this investigation and ensure our inspectors are educating our retailers about this advisory."

**New York State Health Commissioner Dr. Howard Zucker said,** "We are grateful for the efforts of members of these state agencies who work hard every day to protect the health and wellbeing of all New Yorkers. We urge everyone to avoid eating these products until further notice."

Cyclosporiasis is a gastrointestinal illness caused by the microscopic parasite *Cyclospora cayetanensis*. People can become infected by consuming food or water contaminated with the parasite. Outbreaks of Cyclosporiasis have often been associated with imported fresh produce. Illness typically results in watery diarrhea, and can include loss of appetite, weight loss, stomach cramps, bloating, nausea and fatigue. These symptoms can appear approximately 1-2 weeks after ingestion of the contaminated source. If untreated, symptoms can last as long as one month or longer and can return one or more times. Infection is generally not transmitted directly from person-to-person.

As [announced earlier this month](#), the New York State Department of Health has been working collaboratively with the New York State Department of Agriculture and Markets and local health departments to investigate multiple cases of Cyclosporiasis in the Capital Region. While three dining establishments were initially identified as part of this investigation, through cooperation with several other Capital Region restaurants and interviews with patrons, the Departments were able to identify additional locations where patrons were exposed and to provide strong evidence to help support this advisory.

To date, 69 lab-confirmed cases of Cyclosporiasis have been identified in patrons who ate at restaurants or attended events in the Capital Region. There are 204 lab-confirmed cases of Cyclosporiasis in New York State outside of New York City, a significant increase from previous years.

FDA is also working with the Siga Logistics to facilitate a recall of the product. In addition, it has increased import screening on basil and will continue to investigate the cause and source of the outbreak as well as the distribution of products.

As of the FDA advisory, cases of people who have become ill from Cyclosporiasis have been reported in New York and in at least 10 other states. The illnesses started on dates ranging from June 14, 2019 to July 9, 2019.

The FDA is recommending consumers not buy, eat, or serve any fresh basil imported from Siga Logistics de RL de CV located in Morelos, Mexico. They also recommend people not consume or serve uncooked items like pesto or salad that may include fresh basil from Mexico unless there is certainty that the fresh basil was not exported by Siga Logistics de RL de CV. If consumers are not able to determine the source of the basil, the FDA recommends it be avoided.

In addition, the FDA strongly advises importers, suppliers, and distributors, as well as restaurants, retailers, and other food service providers to not sell, serve or distribute fresh basil exported by Siga Logistics de RL de CV. If there is uncertainty of the source, the FDA recommends to not sell, serve or distribute the product.

The New York State Department of Health recommends that individuals with diarrhea for three or more days and any of the above symptoms contact their healthcare provider. In addition to providing care for their symptoms, their provider may choose to order tests that can aid in the diagnosis of the cause of their illness. Also, antibiotics may need to be prescribed as a treatment for infected individuals. The Department of Health and partners in the local health departments have issued a Healthcare Provider Alert to local healthcare providers to notify them of an increase in reports of laboratory-confirmed cases of Cyclosporiasis and to advice of appropriate methods of testing and treatment for people who may present with diarrheal illness consistent with this infection.

For more information on Cyclosporiasis click [here](#).