

Parasite found in vegetables; three fall ill

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Staff Writer

Local health officials are busy trying to track down what foods made two York Region residents sick with a microscopic parasite.

And before preparing that salad for dinner tonight, consider this - the bug known as cyclospora may lurk within the crevices of lettuce leaves and other fruits and vegetables.

About 60 people in The Greater Toronto Area have been infected with the bug including two from York Region who were the host and hostess of an engagement party held over a month ago. Almost all of the

30 party guests live in the GTA and have become sick with the bug.

"For this parasite there is a big delay from the time the item is consumed to the time the person gets sick. It takes between seven and 14 days for incubation," said Dr. Eric Mintz, communicable disease manager with the York Region department of health.

Reports of people falling sick with the parasite started to flow into the health department last Friday. Symptoms include explosive diarrhea, bloating, cramps and fatigue. Anyone with persistent diarrhea is advised to see their doctor immediately.

"The main issue is there can be considerable weight loss if it goes untreated," said Mintz adding the parasite will eventually run its course and pass through the body and is not life threatening. In the past, the parasite

has been linked to fruits, vegetables and herbs but no official warning has been made to one particular food because investigators have not determined what is carrying the cyclospora.

Mintz says he has just begun his investigation, was training interviewers Friday and will be asking people affected by the bug about all the foods consumed at the party.

The parasite can latch on to anything grown in the ground, but Mintz says locally grown produce is considered safe.

"It's not endemic here," he said. Last year an outbreak of cyclospora was linked to imported blackberries from Guatemala.

Mintz said there are many misconceptions about cyclospora and how it can be prevented. For example it cannot be passed from person to person, and while washing all fresh fruit and vegetables is a good idea, it is not a panacea. "We would say that although washing fruit is a good thing to do, there is no evidence to show it is particularly helpful when dealing with cyclospora."

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York Region NOTICE

PUBLIC INFORMATION CENTRES

Long-Term Solid Waste Management Planning (Composting, Recycling and Disposal)

As a component of York Region's long-term solid waste management planning, the Region is assessing its waste diversion and disposal needs and opportunities. York Region would like to divert at least 50 percent of its solid waste from disposal by establishing one or more centralized composting facilities for household organics. Such facilities could also be designed to handle the recyclable materials that are now collected from households through "blue box" programs. The waste remaining after composting and recycling will require disposal.

York Region is also considering an opportunity to participate with the City of Toronto and potentially other Regional Municipalities in the Greater Toronto Area in a shared solution for long-term waste disposal. At this point in time, Toronto intends to request the private sector waste management industry to propose solutions for its waste disposal needs for the next 20-year period.

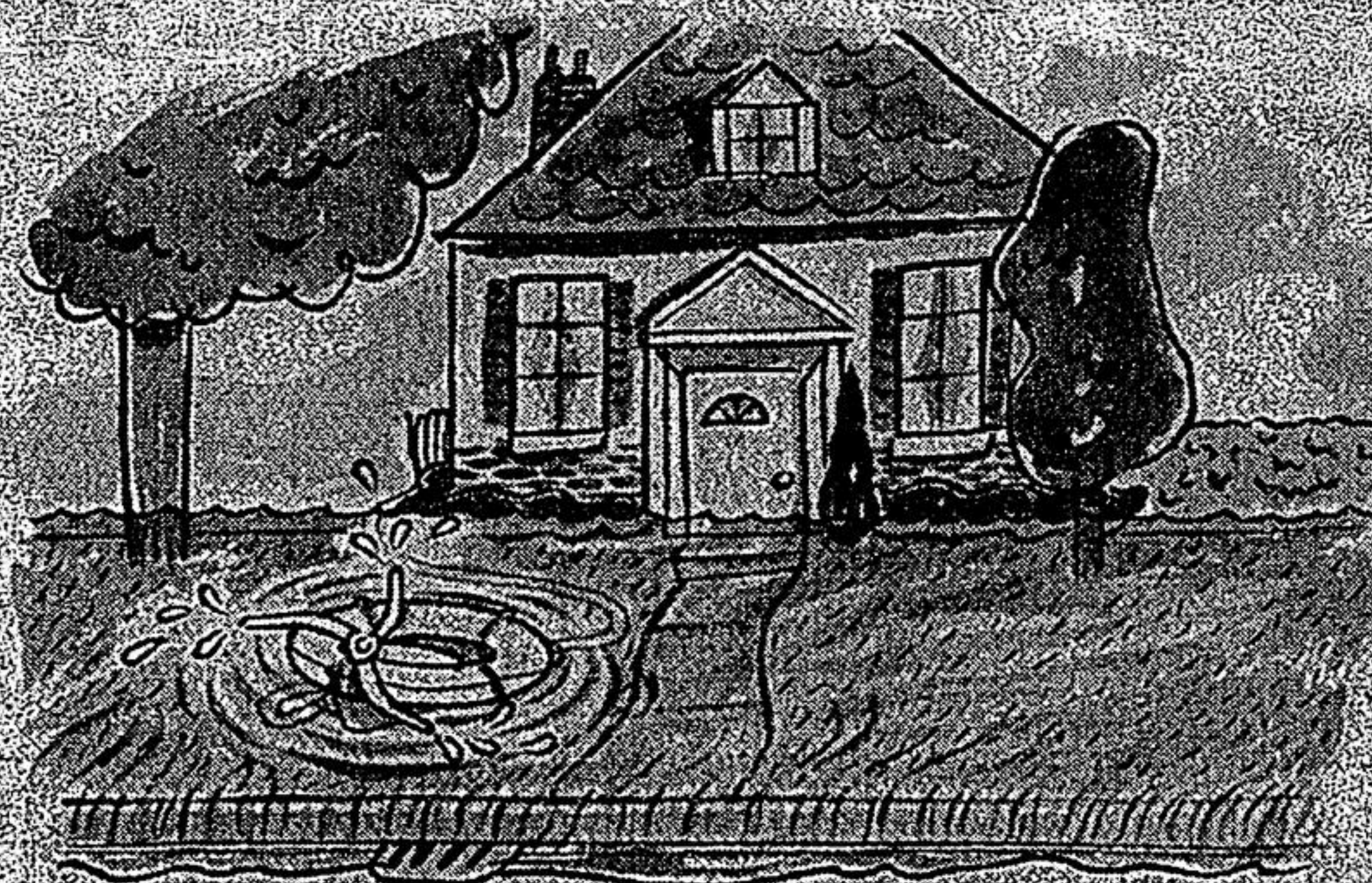
York Region and its consultants are holding the following Public Information Centres to present information regarding the above initiatives and to receive comments from the public.

<p>Date: Thursday, June 18, 1998 Time: 4:30 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. Location: Town of Georgina Ice Palace All Purpose Room 90 Wexford Drive West (at Woodbine Avenue) Keswick</p>	<p>Date: Wednesday, June 24, 1998 Time: 4:30 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. Location: Anthony Roman Centre Canada Room 101 Town Centre Boulevard Markham</p>
<p>Date: Tuesday, June 23, 1998 Time: 4:30 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. Location: Garnet A. Williams Community Centre Room No. 3 501 Clark Avenue West (at Atkinson Avenue) Vaughan</p>	<p>Date: Thursday, June 25, 1998 Time: 4:30 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. Location: York Region Administrative Centre Great Hall, First Floor 17250 Yonge Street Newmarket</p>

Your input to our planning process is important. To make your comments known to the project team, please attend one of the Public Information Centres. If you are unable to attend but wish to provide comments, please contact one of the following persons as appropriate.

<p>Composting, Recycling and Disposal Mr. Jeff Flewelling, ext. 3017 Manager, Solid Waste Management Branch or Mr. Jay Silverstein, ext. 3038 Waste Diversion Coordinator Transportation and Works Department The Regional Municipality of York 17250 Yonge Street, Box 147 Newmarket, ON L3Y 6Z1 tel: (905) 895-1200 (from Newmarket) tel: (905) 764-6345 (from Thornhill) tel: (905) 773-1200 (from Oak Ridges) tel: (705) 437-3921 (from Pefferlaw) fax: (905) 830-6927</p>	<p>Composting and Recycling Mr. Bill Balfour Project Manager Gartner, Lee Limited 140 Renfrew Drive, Suite 102 Markham, ON L3R 6B3 tel: (905) 477-8400, ext. 211 fax: (905) 477-1456 Disposal Ms. Erin Mahoney Project Manager Proctor & Redfern Limited 45 Green Belt Drive Don Mills, ON M3C 3K3 tel: (416) 445-7022, ext. 2264 fax: (416) 445-5276</p>
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Help Save Your Lawn From Drowning...



Only water it once per week.

Did you know that during the summer season, water consumption here in the Region of York will rise by over 60%? Did you realize that watering your lawn accounts for close to 40% of your summer water bill? During the months of June, July and August, when rainfall is the lowest and consumption the highest, we need to focus on water preservation.

Here's what you can do to help preserve water:

- Your grass only needs 2.5 centimeters (1 inch) of water per week to look full, lush and beautiful. Most sprinklers can provide this in 20-30 minutes. A thorough soaking encourages a deep root system and stronger grass. Too much water can actually harm your lawn by causing disease, rotting and bug infestation.
- Water your lawn late evening or early morning in accordance with local municipal by-laws. If you water during mid-day or sunny days, you'll scorch your grass and the water will evaporate rather than reach thirsty roots.
- Use a broom and not a hose to clean driveways, sidewalks and gutters.
- When you're not using your pool, be sure to put the cover back on - you'll save the water from evaporating.
- When washing your car, turn the water off between rinses.



Remember, it's our water, we all use it, we all need to preserve it.