



Indiana State Department of Health

Epidemiology Resource Center

Quick Facts

About...Cryptosporidiosis

What is cryptosporidiosis?

Cryptosporidiosis (krip-toe-spo-rid-e-OH-sis) is an illness caused by a microscopic parasite. The disease and parasite are commonly known as "Crypto". Crypto can survive outside for long periods of time. It is one of the leading causes of waterborne illness.

What are the symptoms of cryptosporidiosis?

Symptoms typically begin within 7 days and include:

- Watery diarrhea
- Stomach cramps
- Upset stomach
- Slight fever
- Weight loss
- Vomiting (more common in children)

Some people with Crypto may not feel ill, but they can still pass the germ to others. People with weakened immune systems may not be able to clear the infection without treatment.

How is cryptosporidiosis spread?

The most common sources of Crypto outbreaks are contaminated drinking water, recreational water parks, pools, lakes, and contaminated beverages. There are many ways to become infected including:

- Infected animals
- Water from lakes, rivers, or swimming pools
- Treated, but unfiltered drinking or recreational water
- Direct contact with an infected person's stool

Who is at risk for getting cryptosporidiosis?

Anyone can become ill, but young children, senior adults, pregnant women, and immune suppressed individuals (such as patients on cancer drugs and with organ transplants) are at high risk for illness.

How do I know if I have cryptosporidiosis?

A person with diarrhea that lasts ≥ 24 hours should consult a doctor. The doctor may collect a stool sample to test for Crypto.

How is cryptosporidiosis treated?

In general, healthy people do not need any treatment. There are drugs available to treat Crypto. Diarrhea can cause dehydration so an infected person should drink plenty of fluids.

How is cryptosporidiosis prevented?

In general, Crypto can be prevented by:

- Washing hands properly
- Separating raw and cooked foods
- Washing all produce before cooking or eating raw
- Not drinking untreated water
- Not changing diapers near swimming pools lakes, ponds, creeks, hot tubs, and other water sources.
- Practicing safe travel while outside the United States:
 - Drink bottled drinks and water, even when brushing teeth.
 - Do not eat uncooked fruits or vegetables unless you peel them yourself.
 - Do not eat foods or drinks from street vendors.
 - Do not drink or eat local water or ice.

All information presented is intended for public use. For more information, please refer to: <http://www.cdc.gov/parasites/crypto/>.

Information on Healthy Water may be found at:
<http://www.cdc.gov/healthywater/>.

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