

Cryptosporidiosis



Infectious Disease
Epidemiology &
Prevention Division

March 2026

What is cryptosporidiosis?

Cryptosporidiosis (krip-toh-spo-rid-E-O-sis), commonly known as "Crypto" is a disease caused by the microscopic parasite *Cryptosporidium* that causes diarrhea. It can survive for long periods of time. Chlorine may not be effective at killing the parasite.

What are the symptoms?



Vomiting



Nausea



Abdominal
Cramps



Fever



Fatigue



Weight Loss

How long do symptoms last?

- Symptoms may begin five to seven days after exposure
- Infected individuals can be symptomatic or asymptomatic
- Frequent watery diarrhea, may occur and can last up to three weeks

How do I know if I have cryptosporidiosis?

Diagnosis of cryptosporidiosis is made by examination of stool (poop) samples. Because patients may not shed enough of the parasite to be detected, your doctor may ask you to submit several stool samples over several days.

How is cryptosporidiosis treated?

Most people who have healthy immune systems will recover without treatment. However, young children and pregnant women may be more susceptible to dehydration resulting from diarrhea. Diarrhea can be managed by drinking plenty of fluids to prevent dehydration. Anti-diarrheal medicine may help slow down diarrhea, but a healthcare provider should be consulted before such medicine is taken.

How does it spread?

Individuals can become infected by accidentally swallowing the parasite. Common ways someone may become ill are through:



Water (drinking water and recreational water)



Person-to-person



Contaminated food



Contact with animals
(cows, chickens, etc.)

How can it be prevented?

- 1 Wash your hands often with soap and water, especially during key times when germs are likely to be spread
- 2 Avoid food that might be contaminated and avoid items that are not pasteurized
- 3 Do not eat fruits and vegetables washed in potentially contaminated water
- 4 Do not use or drink inadequately treated water or eat uncooked food while traveling in countries where water might be unsafe

For more information, visit the
Indiana Department of Health
[cryptosporidiosis webpage](#).



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CLEAN

Wash your hands with soap and water for 20 seconds, especially after using the restroom, swimming, handling animals, and before preparing food.



STAY HOME

Stay home from work, school, or daycare especially if you handle food or work in healthcare or childcare.

CONSUME

Consume only pasteurized dairy products and avoid eating undercooked meat, poultry, eggs and unwashed produce. Avoid swallowing water while swimming or drinking untreated water.



PREPARE AND COOK



- Thaw/marinate in the refrigerator, not on the counter or in the sink
- Cook foods to proper temperatures
- Always properly store, clean, and prepare fruits and vegetable
- Store raw meat separate from fresh produce and other ready-to-eat foods

1

Follow food safety guidelines, consider consuming fully cooked seafood and be careful when consuming raw or undercooked seafood.

2

Avoid swallowing water when swimming or playing in bodies of water. Avoid entering bodies of water if you have open cuts.

3

Do not handle, prepare, or cook food for others while you have symptoms.

4

When sick limit direct contact with others as much as possible.

How is cryptosporidiosis prevented?

- Practice good hygiene by washing your hands often with soap and water, especially during key times when you are likely to spread germs
- Avoid food that might be contaminated and avoid items that are not pasteurized
- Do not eat fruits and vegetables washed in water that might be contaminated
- Do not use or drink inadequately treated water or use ice when traveling in countries where the water might be unsafe
- Avoid eating uncooked foods when traveling in countries where the food might be unsafe

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