



Indiana State Department of Health

Epidemiology Resource Center

Quick Facts

About...Cryptosporidiosis

What is cryptosporidiosis?

Cryptosporidiosis (krip-toe-spo-rid-e-OH-sis) is a disease caused by a parasite that can live in the intestine of humans and animals and is passed in the stool of an infected person or animal. The disease and parasite are commonly known as "Crypto". Crypto can survive outside for long periods of time and is the most common cause of disease by water. Routine water treatments do not kill Crypto.

What are the symptoms of cryptosporidiosis?

Symptoms begin 7 days (range of 1-12 days) and last less than 2 weeks. It is common for symptoms to fade and then return for up to 30 days. Symptoms include:

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

Some people with Crypto may not have any symptoms, but they can still pass the disease to others. After infection, people can shed *Cryptosporidium* in their stool for months. People with weakened immune systems may not be able to clear the infection.

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:

- 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 more than 24 hours should consult a health care provider. The health care provider may collect a stool sample to test for *Cryptosporidium*.

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, cryptosporidiosis can be prevented by practicing good hand washing, good food safety practices, avoid water that may be contaminated, and safe travel outside of the United States.

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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