

CRYPTOSPORIDIOSIS:

YOU CAN PREVENT AN OUTBREAK OF CRYPTOSPORIDIOSIS!

- Do not swim if you have diarrhea.
- Swimmers should avoid swallowing pool water.
- Persons should practice good hygiene before swimming, after using the restroom, and after changing a diaper.
- Wash hands after handling pets or other animals.
- Wash hands after handling items that might be contaminated with the feces of other persons.
- Wash hands before preparing or handling food.
- Wash hands after gardening or other contact with soil.
- Avoid unpasteurized milk or milk products.
- Avoid exposure to calves and lambs and places where these animals are raised.
- Avoid sexual contact with other persons that involves exposure to their feces (follow "safer sex" guidelines).
- Avoid drinking water directly from rivers, lakes, and streams.

Because persons ill with cryptosporidiosis often have intermittent diarrhea and *Cryptosporidium* can be excreted for several weeks after diarrhea subsides, ill swimmers should refrain from swimming while ill with diarrhea and should also not swim for a 2 week period after cessation of diarrhea.

What is Cryptosporidiosis?

Cryptosporidiosis is a disease caused by an intestinal parasite. Watery diarrhea and often abdominal cramping are the major symptoms. In some patients, symptoms will come and go and in other patients they will be persistent. Symptoms usually occur about a week after exposure, but can begin as soon as one day or as late as 12 days after exposure.

Where is it found?

The parasite *Cryptosporidium parvum* is found in the feces of infected animals and people. Persons, dogs and cats become infected when they swallow this parasite. This is one reason why hands should be washed after contact with pets. Hands also should be washed after changing a child's diaper and after using the toilet. Other activities that bring a person in contact with feces of another person can result in exposure. The parasite, which can be present in sewage or runoff from feed lots, can contaminate water sources, and several large waterborne outbreaks have occurred. Outbreaks also have occurred in child day care centers.

What are the symptoms?

Symptoms can last for up to 30 days in persons who are otherwise healthy. In persons with weakened immune systems, including people with HIV/AIDS and cancer, transplant patients taking immunosuppressive drugs and people with genetically weakened immune systems, symptoms can persist indefinitely. Persistent diarrhea due to cryptosporidiosis in these persons can lead to death.