

FACT SHEET

Cryptosporidiosis

What is Cryptosporidiosis?

Cryptosporidiosis is a diarrheal disease caused by microscopic parasites. Once an animal or person has become infected, the parasite lives in the intestine and passes in the stool. The parasite can survive outside the body for long periods of time and is very resistant to chlorine-based disinfectants.

How is it spread?

Cryptosporidiosis is found in soil, food, water, or surfaces that have been contaminated with infected human or animal feces. A person becomes infected by swallowing the parasite which can happen in many ways: (1) swallowing recreational water that has been contaminated with *Cryptosporidium* from pools, hot tubs, lakes, fountains, rivers, springs, ponds, and streams, (2) eating uncooked contaminated food, (3) swallowing *Cryptosporidium* from contaminated surfaces like bathrooms, diaper pails, and toys.

Symptoms usually begin 2-10 days after exposure and last 1-2 weeks. An infected person should avoid recreational water until two weeks after symptoms resolve.

What are the symptoms?

- Watery diarrhea
- Stomach cramping or pain
- Nausea and vomiting
- Fever
- Dehydration
- Weight loss

How can it be prevented?

Practice good handwashing after using the bathroom or diaper changing and before eating or preparing food. Use soap and water, alcohol-based hand sanitizers are not effective against cryptosporidiosis. Do not drink untreated water or swallow recreational water. Wash linens, clothing, dishwasher or dryer safe toys, etc. soiled with vomit or diarrhea as soon as possible.

How is it treated?

There is no specific treatment and no cure for Cryptosporidiosis. The treatment is supportive care to prevent dehydration from fluid loss due to diarrhea and vomiting. Eating a well-balanced diet may help speed recovery. Over the counter anti-diarrheal medication may help with diarrhea, but a health care provider should be consulted before such medication is taken, particularly in children.

This fact sheet is for informational purposes only and is not intended for self-diagnosis or as a substitute for consultation with a health care provider. For more information contact your health care provider or visit the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention at www.cdc.gov.

Livingston County Health Department

2300 East Grand River Avenue, Suite 102, Howell, MI 48843 • 517-546-9850 • www.LCHD.org