

IDRS Infectious Disease Reporting System

Disease Reporting 24 Hours a Day

Columbus Public Health and Franklin County Public Health

CRYPTOSPORIDIOSIS

Cryptosporidiosis is a diarrheal disease caused by a parasite that often lives in water. The parasite can take on a resistant form called a cyst, making it hard to kill.

Symptoms

Symptoms usually appear within 1-12 days of being exposed to the parasite, and may include:

- Watery diarrhea (may range from mild to severe)
- Abdominal cramping
- Sometimes people have a slight fever, nausea, vomiting, lack of appetite, and headache.
- For healthy people, cryptosporidiosis usually lasts one to two weeks.

Transmission

- These parasites naturally lives in lakes and streams. Chlorine cannot kill the cysts, so they can live in swimming pools, hot tubs, or well water. People often get sick from swallowing water while swimming.
- Cryptosporidium can also spread from person to person when hands, surfaces, or objects become contaminated with stool (poop) from an infected person. Later, other people may touch these items and unknowingly transfer the cysts to their mouths or food.
- People may get sick from eating food that was prepared by a person sick with cryptosporidiosis.
- Animals can have cryptosporidium and pass it on to people who handle or clean up after the animal or when animal droppings contaminate water or food supplies.

Treatment

- A health care provider can have a stool sample tested for cryptosporidium.
- Most people can recover from cryptosporidiosis on their own. Because diarrhea can cause fluid loss, people who are ill should drink plenty of fluids until they recover.
- A health care provider may prescribe a medicine called Alinia for people who need it. People who have problems with the immune system may have trouble getting rid of the infection.

Prevention

- Wash hands thoroughly, especially after going to the bathroom or changing a diaper, before preparing meals or eating. Wash with hot, soapy water. Hand sanitizer does not kill cryptosporidium cysts.
- Disinfect surfaces that may be contaminated by hands or stool, especially bathrooms, kitchens, diapering areas, and children's toys and cribs.
- Do not drink unpasteurized milk, dairy products, juice, or ciders
- Don't swim when you have diarrhea. You can spread germs in the water and make other people sick. If you take children swimming, take them on bathroom breaks or check diapers often. Everyone should shower and wash well before getting into a pool or hot tub.

Additional Information

People with cryptosporidiosis who attend a child care center or who work in food service, patient care, or child care should stay home until the diarrhea is gone. Ohio Law says that food service workers with cryptosporidiosis need three stool samples that do not have the parasite in them before returning to work.

All information is general in nature and is not intended to be used as a substitute for appropriate professional advice.



c/o Franklin County Public Health, 280 East Broad Street, Columbus, Ohio 43215-4562

Call: (614) 525-8888 • After Hours: (614) 525-3965 • Fax: (614) 525-8890

Email: idsr@franklincountyohio.gov • Web: www.idrsinfo.org

