



Cryptosporidiosis

What is Cryptosporidiosis?

Cryptosporidiosis (pronounced krip-toe-spo-rid-e-o-sis) is a disease, often called "crypto," caused by *Cryptosporidium parvum*, which is a single-celled microscopic parasite that lives in the intestines of people and animals.

When did I get it?

Symptoms usually appear 2 to 10 days after infection with the parasite.

How did I get it?

From any of the following sources:

- From direct contact with farm animals and their bedding particularly cattle, sheep or pets. Seasonal outbreaks have been associated with farm visits to feed and handle lambs.
- From drinking untreated milk or infected water supplies.
- From close contact with another infected person.
- From contact with infected swimming pool water.



What are the signs and symptoms?

- watery diarrhoea,
- stomach cramps,
- an upset stomach,
- or a slight fever.

These symptoms may lead to weight loss and dehydration. However, not everyone infected has symptoms. Children under 5 years old are commonly affected.



How do I stop it spreading?

- While you are ill and have symptoms you are infectious. You can return to work or school once you have been free from diarrhoea for 48 hours.
- You should tell your employer you have had cryptosporidium infection if you work with vulnerable groups such as the elderly, the young, those in poor health, or handle food.
- Wash hands thoroughly after going to the toilet and before preparing meals or eating.
- Supervise young children who are infected with hand washing.



- Disinfect all areas in the toilet daily (including door handles, other contact areas).
- Do not use swimming pools until you have been free of symptoms for **14 days**.
- Avoid sharing baths or paddling pools until you have been free of symptoms for **14 days**.
- If you or a member of your household is receiving cancer therapy treatment (or otherwise immunocompromised) you should tell the Doctor or Nursing staff at the Treatment Centre about this infection.



How can I prevent contracting Cryptosporidiosis?

- Wash hands thoroughly with soap and water after using the toilet and before handling food.
- Avoid water or food that may be contaminated and wash all raw vegetables and fruit before eating.
- Wash hands thoroughly after contact with animals.
- Avoid drinking water from lakes, rivers, springs, ponds, or streams.
- When travelling in countries where the water supply may be unsafe, avoid drinking unboiled tap water and avoid uncooked foods washed with unboiled tap water. Bottled or canned beverages or pasteurised fruit drinks, and steaming hot coffee and tea are safe to drink. You should check the label on bottled water to make sure it has been properly filtered before drinking.

Where can I get more advice?

- Your own G.P
- You should inform your place of work or in the case of children, the head teacher of the school to find out if exclusion is necessary and when you can return.
- The investigating officer may be contacted on the number below for further advice if required.

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