

PREVENTING THE SPREAD OF CRYPTO

What is Cryptosporidium (or Crypto)?

Cryptosporidium is a parasite that is spread through the stool of an infected person or an animal.

Symptoms may appear 2 to 14 days after exposure, but usually within 7 days, and may or may not include, *loose stools or watery diarrhea, abdominal pain or cramps, nausea and vomiting, fever, weight loss or loss of appetite and dehydration*. A child does not have to have symptoms to be carrying the parasite.

Crypto can be spread by:

- Swallowing **water** (either from swimming or drinking) or **food** contaminated by human stool, usually from tiny amounts that cannot be seen.
- Drinking or consuming ice from contaminated water sources.
- **Person to person**, especially in settings such as homes and childcare centers where diapers are changed regularly and not washing hands after using the bathroom or changing diapers.
- Contact with infected **animals**.

How can I prevent the spread of crypto?

If you or your child is having diarrhea,

Do:

- Wash your hands with warm, soapy water for 20 seconds:
 - After using the bathroom or changing diapers.
 - After contact with animals or their environments (petting zoos, farms, fairs).
 - Before eating or preparing foods.
- Change baby's diapers in a bathroom or a diaper-changing area when swimming, not at poolside.
- Take your kids on bathroom breaks or check diapers often when swimming. Waiting to hear, "I have to go," may mean that it's too late.
- Shower with soap before swimming.

Do Not:

- Swim or allow children with diarrhea in the swimming pool for two weeks after the diarrhea stops.
- Send your child to daycare or preschool, if the child is having diarrhea.
- Go to work if you are a health care worker, food handler, or day care worker.
- Prepare food for others.
- Drink or use ice made from untreated water.
- Swallow recreational water. (like swimming pools, splash pools, lakes, rivers, springs, streams, ponds).

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For further information visit:

www.foodsafety.gov

Crypto fact sheet:

http://www.stlouisco.com/doh/cdc/Fact_Sheets/Crypto.pdf

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