



1. What is cryptosporidiosis?

Cryptosporidiosis (krip-toe-spo-rid-e-o-sis), often called “Crypto,” is a disease caused by a parasite (an organism living in or on another organism) that can live in the intestines of humans and animals and is passed in the stool (feces).

2. How do you get cryptosporidiosis?

You can get Crypto by:

- Eating contaminated food
- Drinking contaminated water
- Being exposed to human stool through sexual contact
- Touching your mouth with contaminated hands

People who are at risk for Crypto include child care workers, children in diapers who attend child care centers, people exposed to human stool by sexual contact, and people with weak immune systems (e.g.: patients with HIV, cancer, pregnant women, or the elderly).

3. How do you know if you have cryptosporidiosis?

Crypto symptoms appear two to ten days after infection.

The most common symptoms of Crypto include:

- Watery diarrhea
- Upset stomach
- Fever
- Stomach cramps

Some people infected with Crypto may not have any symptoms. If you think you have Crypto, see your doctor. Your stool may be tested for Crypto.

4. How is cryptosporidiosis treated?

Most people with healthy immune systems will recover without treatment. People with diarrhea should drink plenty of fluids to avoid dehydration. In some cases, your doctor may prescribe medication to treat the diarrhea.

5. How can cryptosporidiosis be prevented?

- To prevent spreading the infection, every member of the household should wash their hands with soap and clean water often, especially at these times:
 - Before eating or preparing food
 - After using the bathroom or changing diapers
 - After handling pets or animals
- Do not swim in recreational water (pools, hot tubs, lakes, rivers, oceans, etc.) if you have cryptosporidiosis and for at least 2 weeks after the diarrhea stops.
- Avoid close contact with anyone who has a weak immune system.
- People with weak immune systems should wash, peel, or cook all fruits and vegetables and boil or filter their drinking water, to ensure its safety.
- Avoid sexual practices that might result in oral exposure to stool (e.g.: oral-anal contact).

Sources

1. *Cryptosporidiosis*. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). <http://www.cdc.gov/Crypto/>
2. *Cryptosporidiosis*. L.A. County Department of Public Health. <http://publichealth.lacounty.gov/acd>
3. *Cryptosporidiosis*. The Mayo Clinic. <http://www.mayoclinic.com/health/Cryptosporidium/DS00907>

For additional resources, please visit the L.A. County Department of Public Health website <http://publichealth.lacounty.gov>.