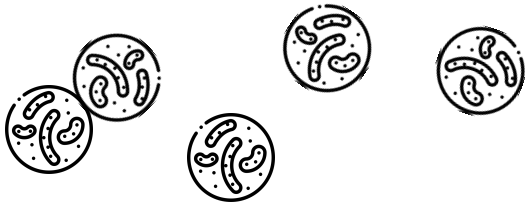
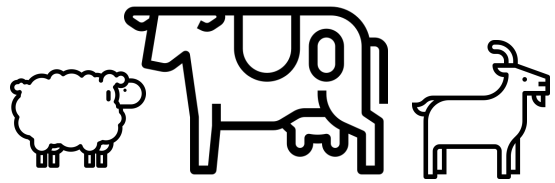


Cryptosporidiosis

Fact Sheet



Cryptosporidiosis (Crypto) is caused by a parasite called *Cryptosporidium*. The parasite has a hard outer shell, so it can live outside the body for a long time and is very hard to kill.



The parasite lives in the intestines of people and animals. An infected animal passes the parasite in their stool. People get the disease when they swallow the parasite.

Common Signs and Symptoms



Diarrhea



Nausea and Vomiting



Stomach Pain



Fever

The most common symptom is watery diarrhea. Dehydration and weight loss are also common symptoms. Signs and symptoms usually start two to ten days after swallowing the parasite. Symptoms last one to two weeks, but can range from a few days to four or more weeks. Symptoms may get better and then get bad again before they finally go away. Some infected people do not have any symptoms.

People with weakened immune systems may develop serious, chronic, and sometimes fatal illness.



People more at risk to become infected include:

- Children in daycare and childcare workers
- Backpackers, hikers, and campers who drink unfiltered, untreated water
- People who drink from untreated shallow, unprotected wells
- People who consume unpasteurized milk products or juice
- People exposed to human feces through sexual contact
- People who handle cattle



Talk to a health care provider if you think you have Crypto. They may ask for a stool sample to send to a laboratory. Most people do not need treatment.

Drink plenty of liquids to prevent dehydration. Rapid loss of fluids from diarrhea can lead to death in babies. Talk to a health care provider about fluid replacement therapy options for infants.

Spread of Cryptosporidiosis

Crypto can spread by:



Swallowing
Contaminated
Water or Beverages



Swallowing
Contaminated
Recreational Water



Contact With
Contaminated
Stool



Eating
Contaminated Food

Crypto can be found in soil, food, water, or on contaminated surfaces. Crypto also spreads by touching your mouth with contaminated hands. Do not prepare or handle food while sick. Do not swim if you have diarrhea. Children in diapers should not be in the water if they have diarrhea. Crypto can be passed through contact with stool during sexual contact.

Prevent Cryptosporidiosis



Wash your hands
with soap and water



Do not drink raw milk
or unpasteurized
juices



Wash all fruits and
vegetables before
eating

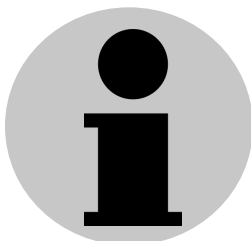


Do not drink untreated
water from ponds,
lakes, or streams

Always wash your hands with soap and water:

- Before eating, preparing food, and after preparing food
- After using the toilet or changing diapers
- After touching animals, animal living spaces, and animal waste
- After gardening

For More Information, Visit:



1. www.maine.gov/dhhs/crypto
2. www.cdc.gov/crypto

You can also call Maine CDC at 1-800-821-5821.