

Mission:

To protect, promote & improve the health of all people in Florida through integrated state, county & community efforts.



Rick Scott
Governor

John H. Armstrong, MD, FACS
State Surgeon General & Secretary

Vision: To be the Healthiest State in the Nation

CRYPTOSPORIDIOSIS

Accompanying: Hand Washing Fact Sheet

What is Cryptosporidiosis?

Cryptosporidiosis is an illness caused by a microscopic parasite, *Cryptosporidium parvum*. The disease is often called “crypto.”

What are the signs and symptoms of a Cryptosporidiosis infection?

The most common symptom is large amounts of watery diarrhea. Abdominal cramps, nausea, vomiting, fever, headache and loss of appetite are also symptoms. Healthy people usually have symptoms for two weeks or less. However, symptoms may last as long as 30 days. During this time, symptoms may come and go.

How are Cryptosporidiosis infections spread?

Crypto is spread by eating food contaminated by the feces of an infected person or by ingesting food obtained from infected animals. Modes of infection include infected people failing to wash their hands after using the restroom or diapering, eating contaminated fruits and vegetables that have not been washed, drinking contaminated water, swimming or playing in contaminated recreational water (e.g. rivers, lakes, pools, Jacuzzis), and exposure to wild or domestic animals.

What is the incubation period of Cryptosporidiosis and how long is it contagious?

Symptoms may appear 2 to 14 days after exposure, but usually within 7 days. The infected person can infect others when symptoms begin and for several weeks after the symptoms disappear. Infected persons who do not have symptoms can still infect others.

What should I do if I think I have a Cryptosporidiosis infection?

Persons who have these symptoms should see their physicians. This is a reportable disease to the Health Department. Children and staff in childcare settings and health care workers may return to their routine activities after being symptom free for 24 hrs.

How can I prevent myself and others from getting a Cryptosporidiosis infection?

Avoid drinking untreated and improperly filtered surface water. Wash hands carefully as outlined in the accompanying fact sheet after use of the restroom, handling animals or their feces, working in soil, washing fresh fruits and vegetables, properly disposing of sewage waste, before and after preparing foods, and avoid recreational water activities for at least two weeks after diarrhea stops. These steps can prevent cryptosporidiosis infection.

For more information, please contact the Florida Department of Health in Orange County Epidemiology Program at 407-858-1420. You may also visit the Epidemiology Program website, <http://orchd.com/generalHealth/epidemiology/index.asp>, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention website, <http://www.cdc.gov/parasites/cryptospor/>, or the DOH-Orange School Health website at <http://orchd.com/personalHealth/schoolHealth/index.asp> for additional information.

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