

Kentucky Department for Public Health  
Public Health Fact Sheet for Parents  
**Cryptosporidiosis**

**Cryptosporidiosis** is a diarrheal illness caused by the parasite *Cryptosporidium* or “Crypto” for short. Symptoms include watery diarrhea, vomiting, fever, loss of appetite and abdominal pain. Symptoms may last up to 10 days. Symptoms may not start for 2 to 14 days after being exposed to the parasite.

Cryptosporidiosis can spread easily; it takes a very small amount of the germ to cause illness. Alcohol based hand sanitizers do not effectively kill *Cryptosporidium*. *Cryptosporidium* is very hardy and can survive for months in the environment. It is tolerant to chlorine and can survive for **days** in properly chlorinated pools. Some infected people do not have symptoms but can still pass the germ on to others.

*Cryptosporidium* is spread by:

- Eating or drinking contaminated food or beverages
- Touching contaminated hands, surfaces, or objects
- Handling pets and farm animals or their environment.
- Swallowing contaminated recreational or pool water.

To prevent cryptosporidiosis and other diarrheal illnesses:

- Wash hands with soap and water after using the toilet, helping children use the toilet, changing diapers, or handling animals or their environment, and especially before preparing food
- Assist small children with handwashing
- Don’t swallow pool or recreational water or get it in your mouth.
- Don’t change diapers at poolside or “wash your hands” in the pool after changing diapers.
- Take frequent bathroom breaks while swimming
- Do not swim or enter pools, hot tubs, lakes or other recreational water for two weeks after diarrhea symptoms have stopped.
- Avoid eating or drinking unpasteurized milk or juices.

For more information visit the CDC website <http://www.cdc.gov/parasites/crypto/>