



# CRYPTOSPORIDIOSIS (“CRYPTO”) FACT SHEET

## WHAT IS CRYPTO?

Cryptosporidium is a microscopic parasite that causes the diarrheal disease cryptosporidiosis. Both the parasite and the disease are commonly known as "Crypto." Crypto is a leading cause of waterborne disease among people in the United States. Crypto lives in the intestine of infected humans or animals and is shed in their stool. People with decreased immunity are most at risk for severe disease.

## HOW DO YOU GET CRYPTO?

Crypto may be found in soil, food, water, or surfaces that have been contaminated with the feces from infected humans or animals. Infections have been linked to drinking contaminated municipal water or recreational water. Crypto is chlorine resistant and difficult to filter out in swimming pools.

## SYMPTOMS

After exposure, it typically takes 7-10 days to show the first signs of being ill. In otherwise healthy individuals, symptoms usually last 1 to 2 weeks. Symptoms may include:

- Watery diarrhea
- stomach cramps
- dehydration
- nausea
- vomiting
- fever
- weight loss

## TREATMENT

Nitazoxanide has been FDA-approved for treatment of diarrhea caused by Cryptosporidium in people with healthy immune systems and is available by prescription. Most people who have healthy immune systems will recover without treatment. Discuss treatment options with your doctor.

## PREVENTION

- Wash hands with soap and water after using the restroom, after changing diapers, before eating or preparing food, and after contact with animals.
- Shower before you get in the pool.
- Do not swim if you have diarrhea
- Avoid swallowing water when swimming or playing in lakes, ponds, streams, swimming pools
- While at the pool, take frequent bathroom breaks and change diapers in the restroom- not poolside.
- Any person infected with Crypto who attends or works in a child care center, handles food, or provides direct patient care should be excluded

## DPHD EFFORTS:

Reports of suspected and confirmed cases of disease are made to the Delaware Public Health District. The Health District investigates potential sources of illness, conducts surveillance for the spread of disease, and engages in community outreach and education.