Cryptosporidiosis

Cryptosporidiosis is a relatively common parasitic infection that sometimes causes symptoms of watery diarrhea and abdominal cramps. Diagnosed infections typically last 1–2 weeks in immunocompetent persons, but may be unusually protracted. Infections can be difficult to control among the immunocompromised, notably AIDS patients. Repeated studies suggest that the prevalence of cryptosporidiosis among young children, particular those in large child-care facilities, is surprisingly high. Many of these infections are asymptomatic.

Given the number of asymptomatic and undiagnosed infections, surveillance data can be difficult to interpret, although they have been used to identify a number of outbreaks over the years, most commonly associated with childcare or water (both drinking and recreational). Theoretical concerns about the possibility of crypto transmission in unfiltered drinking water are leading a number of communities, including Portland, to consider expensive changes to routine water treatment methods.

1998 saw an outbreak of 69 cases associated with a swimming pool in Multnomah County.

Cryptosporidiosis by Year
Oregon, 1994–2003
Cryptosporidiosis
by Onset Month
Oregon, 2003

The September spike in cases is attributable to a swimming-pool-associated outbreak in 1998.

Incidence of Cryptosporidiosis
by Age and Sex
Oregon, 2003

Cases/100,000
Incidence of Cryptosporidiosis
Oregon vs. Nationwide
1994–2003

Cases/100,000

1998 saw an outbreak of 69 cases associated with a swimming pool in Multnomah County

National figures not available before 1997

Incidence of Cryptosporidiosis
by County
Oregon, 2003

Tillamook County’s rate represented 2 cases