

What is *Cryptosporidium* and how is it Spread?

“Crypto” (KRIP-toe), short for *Cryptosporidium*, is a parasite that lives in the intestinal tract of humans and animals and is passed through stool. This disease is a common cause of diarrhea in children, especially in childcare settings. The hallmark symptom of Crypto is watery diarrhea, which may be accompanied by stomach ache, nausea, vomiting, fever, and a general sick feeling. Symptoms can come and go for up to 30 days, but usually subside in 1 to 2 weeks. Anyone who has been ill with Crypto can still be infectious for **at least 2 weeks after diarrhea stops**, because the parasite can still be SHED in the intestinal tract EVEN AFTER SYMPTOMS RESOLVE.

Cryptosporidiosis is a zoonotic disease (readily transmitted to humans) and has been frequently reported in school children visiting open farms and petting zoos.

- **People who are symptomatic persons should not**

- Go to school or daycare
- Work as a food handler, daycare provider or healthcare worker
- Swim in pools, hot tubs or other community bathing locations until two weeks after symptoms resolved.

- **Other prevention and control measures**

- Work with children so they wash hands thoroughly with soap and water after using the toilet or having animal contact and before handling or eating food. Observe handwashing and assist when needed.
- The most commonly disinfectants, including bleach, have little effect on the parasite. An application of **hydrogen peroxide seems to work best**. Soak contaminated surfaces for 20 minutes with a 3% hydrogen peroxide (99% kill rate) and then rinse them thoroughly with water.
- **Do not mix hydrogen peroxide and bleach solutions.** The two chemicals may react violently.
- **Note:** Hydrogen peroxide breaks down when exposed to sunlight. Store hydrogen peroxide in dedicated opaque containers — never reuse containers for a different chemical.



For more information visit the [Center for Disease Control and Preventions website](#)