

Cryptosporidiosis

How do you catch it?

- from water that is contaminated with the parasite – but it is very rarely found in tap water
- from someone else who is ill. The illness spreads more easily among children because they are less likely to wash their hands
- from farm animals, especially sheep and cows
- from drinking unpasteurised milk
- travelling abroad to countries where the parasite is more commonly found in their water supply and drinking or swimming in untreated water.

How might it affect me?

You may get stomach cramps, fever, watery foul smelling diarrhoea which is often greenish, weight loss and tiredness. Dehydration may result from the diarrhoea. The symptoms usually last about 10 days but can continue for longer periods.

Can I pass it on to other people?

Yes, very easily. However, simple steps can be taken to stop this from happening - the most important way is by thorough hand washing with liquid soap and water.

When should you wash your hands?

- after using or cleaning the toilet
- after changing nappies
- before preparing food or drink
- after handling or washing soiled bedding, linen or clothing

- after any cleaning, gardening and emptying rubbish bins
- young children should be supervised when washing hands or have their hands washed for them

What is the treatment?

If you have diarrhoea then you need to drink plenty of fluids. Antibiotics cannot be used to treat *Cryptosporidiosis*.

What else should I do while I am ill?

- if you can, avoid preparing food for other people
- wash your hands before leaving the house
- clean toilet seats, flush handles, door handles and taps every day and when visibly soiled - with hot soapy water
- use your usual toilet cleaner and brush to clean the toilet pan
- if there is accidental soiling of clothes, wash them on the hottest temperature suitable for the fabric
- make sure that everyone in the household washes their hands
- do not go to swimming pools, spa baths and jacuzzis until two weeks after the diarrhoea has stopped

When can I go back to work or school?

You should not return to work or school until 48 hours after your diarrhoea has stopped and you are feeling well.

What if I live in a home or am in hospital?

- If you are in hospital or a care home wherever possible:
- you will be looked after in a single room
 - staff and visitors should wash their hands before leaving the room

How to avoid catching Cryptosporidiosis

- Always wash your hands after handling farm animals
- Avoid drinking unpasteurised milk
- If you are out in the countryside do not drink water from a stream without treating it first (by boiling)
- Always drink bottled water whilst abroad and avoid ice in drinks or eating any food prepared or washed with tap water

Where can I get further advice?



Northumberland, Tyne & Wear
Health Protection Unit
7a Tower House
St Catherines Court
Sunderland Enterprise Park
Sunderland SR5 3XJ
Tel: 0191 516 3333

An information leaflet prepared by:

**Northumberland, Tyne & Wear Health Protection Unit,
South of Tyne Office**

In conjunction with:

**Gateshead Council
South Tyneside Metropolitan Borough Council
Sunderland Council**

What you need to know about



Cryptosporidiosis

Cryptosporidiosis is an illness caused by a parasite called *Cryptosporidium*. It can cause watery diarrhoea, stomach cramps and fever. The illness usually lasts about ten days.

This leaflet tells you about:

- signs and symptoms,
- how to treat it,
- what you need to do to stop it spreading, and
- how to avoid it.