

# Cryptosporodiosis Fact Sheet

## What is Cryptosporodiosis?

If you have this infection you may experience any combination of the following symptoms:

- Profuse, watery diarrhoea
- Stomach Ache
- Vomiting
- Fever
- Weight Loss

Symptoms usually last for 1-3 weeks and then clear up without treatment. It is most common in children aged 1-5 years and young adults. The incubation period is about 10 days.

## What causes the illness?

A microscopic parasite called *Cryptosporidium*, which, if swallowed, can cause diarrhoea. It is spread by being passed out in the bowel motions of infected people.

### Common routes of infection are:

- **Person to person contact**

This happens when there is an accidental transfer of the germ from bowel motions to mouth via unwashed hands or contaminated articles.

- **Eating undercooked meats**

Poorly cooked sausages, tripe, faggots and offal have been implicated. BBQs and fondues should be well cooked.

- **Contact with infected animals**

Cattle and sheep and domestic pets such as cats and dogs can carry the parasite, especially if they have diarrhoea. Animal handlers are at greater risk.

- **Drinking raw and unpasteurised milk**

The parasite can pass from an infected cow into the milk. However, the pasteurisation process will kill the parasite and make the milk safe to drink.

- **Contact with contaminated water**

Generally drinking water and swimming pool water is safe, but ponds, lakes and rivers can become contaminated. Water and sewage workers can be at risk.

## Precautionary measures

- Washing hands regularly and thoroughly. **Always** wash hands before meals and after using the lavatory. Soap, hot water and a nailbrush should be used.
- A person suffering from the illness should be given their own towel and flannel to use.
- Take particular care when changing the nappies of infected children.
- Always wash raw fruit and vegetables thoroughly especially when abroad.
- Ensure meat is properly and thoroughly cooked especially sausages, offal etc.
- Always drink pasteurised milk.
- Take care when swimming in untreated water, eg ponds, rivers etc.
- When abroad, if you suspect or know the drinking water to be contaminated, it should be boiled before drinking.
- Avoid handling food that is going to be eaten by other people.
- Take care with personal hygiene when handling animals, particularly if they are ill.

**Disclaimer:** This article is for information only and should not be used for the diagnosis or treatment of medical conditions. HBC has used all reasonable care in compiling the information but make no warranty as to its accuracy. Always consult a doctor or other health care professional for diagnosis and treatment of medical conditions.