

Facts About Crypto and Swimming Pools

What is Crypto and how can it affect me?

“Crypto,” short for *Cryptosporidium*, is a germ that causes diarrhea. It is found in the poop of a person who has been infected with Crypto. Crypto is protected by a tough outer shell, which allows it to survive for more than 7 days, even in properly chlorinated pools and water playgrounds. Crypto can cause prolonged diarrhea (lasting 2 weeks or more, during which the diarrhea might stop and start again). Crypto can make anyone sick, but people with weakened immune systems are more likely to become seriously ill when infected with Crypto.

How is Crypto spread in pools?

Crypto is spread by swallowing water that has been contaminated with poop containing Crypto.

You share the water—and the germs in it—with every person who enters the pool. If one person infected with Crypto has diarrhea in the water, the water can be contaminated with tens of millions of Crypto germs. It only takes 10 or fewer germs to cause infection, which means that swallowing even a small amount of contaminated water can make you sick.

Crypto can also be spread by swallowing contaminated water in water playgrounds, hot tubs, lakes, rivers, springs, ponds, streams, and oceans.

How do I protect myself and those I care about?

Because Crypto can stay alive for days, even in properly chlorinated water, stopping the germ from getting in the water in the first place is critical.

All of us can take the following healthy swimming steps:

- **Stay out of the water if you are sick with diarrhea.**
 - » If you have been diagnosed with Crypto, don't go back in the water until 2 weeks after diarrhea has completely stopped.
 - » Don't poop in the water.
- **Don't swallow the water.**
- **Take kids on bathroom breaks or check diapers every hour.**
 - » Change diapers away from the water to keep germs from getting in.



SWIMMERS AND PARENTS

For more information on

- **Healthy Swimming**, visit www.cdc.gov/healthyswimming
- **Diarrhea and Swimming**, visit www.cdc.gov/healthywater/swimming/swimmers/rwi/diarrheal-illness.html
- **Crypto**, visit www.cdc.gov/parasites/crypto/

POOL OPERATORS

For guidelines and resources on how to prevent Crypto and other germs from spreading in recreational water, visit www.cdc.gov/mahc and www.cdc.gov/healthywater/swimming/audience-aquatics-staff.html.



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