

WHAT IS CRYPTOSPORIDIUM ?



Cryptosporidium is a parasitic infection of the bowel causing diarrhoea, vomiting and abdominal pain. It commonly affects children although adults may also become infected.

How did I get it ?

From any of the following sources:

- From direct contact with farm animals and their bedding particularly cattle, sheep or pets. Seasonal outbreaks have been associated with farm visits to feed and handle lambs.
- From drinking untreated milk or infected water supplies.
- From close contact with another infected person.
- From contact with infected swimming pool water.

When did I get it ?

The illness usually occurs within 2 - 5 days of infection but it can be up to 10 days before the symptoms appear.

What are the signs and symptoms ?

- Diarrhoea
- Fever
- Abdominal pain
- Vomiting
- Weight loss

How do I stop it spreading ?

- Wash hands thoroughly after going to the toilet and before preparing meals or eating
- Wash hands thoroughly after handling and feeding animals including pets
- Young children with the infection should have their hands washed for them or be supervised
- Disinfect all areas in the toilet daily (including door handles)
- Infected persons should stay away from work until vomiting and diarrhoea have ceased
- If the infected person is a food handler, works as a health carer / nurse or is a child attending school or a nursery etc. further advice should be obtained.
- Infected persons must not go swimming for 2 weeks once symptoms have stopped.

- Read the accompanying leaflet for further guidance.

Where can I get more advice ?

- Your own General Medical Practitioner or a health specialist will be able to advise upon individual patient health care.
- You should inform your place of work or in the case of children, the head teacher of the school to find out if exclusion is necessary and when you can return.
- The investigating officer will also provide you with a more general leaflet on infection control and may be contacted on the number below for further advice if it is required.

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