



# Cryptosporidiosis

## Definition:

Cryptosporidiosis is caused by a parasite called *Cryptosporidium*.

## Signs and symptoms:

The main symptom is watery diarrhea and may also include stomach pain, fever, nausea, and vomiting. Symptoms can last for 1 to 2 weeks.

## Transmission:

Cryptosporidiosis is primarily transmitted to a person through swallowing the parasite from an item contaminated with feces. Illness may result from consumption of contaminated food, unpasteurized juices or (raw) milk, water that has not been disinfected, or contact with the feces of infected people or animals.

## Diagnosis:

Cryptosporidiosis is diagnosed through laboratory testing of a stool sample for the presence of the *Cryptosporidium* parasite.

## Role of the School Nurse:

### Prevention

- Provide education to students and staff regarding good hand washing with soap and water
- Promote good hand washing when visiting farms, or having contact with animals
- Avoid swallowing water when swimming or playing in lakes, ponds, streams, swimming pools and backyard “kiddie” pools
- Exclude symptomatic students and staff from school and school trips
- Provide education on good food safety practices
- If school is using well water, routine testing of water is recommended

### Treatment Recommendations

- If symptoms are noted, the child should be referred to their healthcare provider
- Most people get better without any treatment. Exceptions are made for those who are immunocompromised.
- Non-specific supportive therapy, including hydration, is important

### Exclusions

- Students should be excluded from school while symptomatic with diarrhea
- Educational modifications may be warranted in children with a positive diagnosis
- See Maine Food Code for exclusions for staff handling food
- Students should be excluded from swimming for 2 weeks after symptoms have resolved.

### Reporting Requirements

- Cryptosporidiosis is a reportable disease – report to Maine CDC at 1-800-821-5821

## Resources:

- Maine CDC cryptosporidiosis website (including fact sheet) <http://www.maine.gov/dhhs/crypto>
- Maine Food Code: <http://www.maine.gov/dhhs/mecdc/environmental-health/el/rules.htm>
- Federal CDC cryptosporidium website <http://www.cdc.gov/crypto>
- USDA food safety website [http://www.fsis.usda.gov/food\\_safety\\_education/index.asp](http://www.fsis.usda.gov/food_safety_education/index.asp)
- Federal CDC raw milk website <http://www.cdc.gov/foodsafety/rawmilk/raw-milk-index.html>
- Federal CDC healthy swimming website <http://www.cdc.gov/healthywater/swimming/>