



GIG  
CYMRU  
NHS  
WALES

Iechyd Cyhoeddus  
Cymru  
Public Health  
Wales



UK Health  
Security  
Agency

## Guidance for the investigation of *Cryptosporidium* linked to swimming pools

### Appendix 6: Example cryptosporidiosis advice notes

**Agencies:** Public Health Wales, UKHSA, Local Authorities, the Chartered Institute of Environmental Health, the Pool Water Treatment Advisory Group and the Chartered Institute for the Management of Sport and Physical Activity.

**Authors:** see main guidance document

**Approved by:** HPA GI programme board

**Approval date:** 24/01/11

**Date of issue:** 24/08/2023

**Document and Version:**  
CRUGUID 102 Appendix 6 v.6

#### Publication/ Distribution:

- Public (Internet: Cryptosporidium Reference Unit website)
- Links from Public Health Wales (Intranet), UKHSA (Internet) and websites of partner organisations

**Review Date:** 24/08/2026

#### Purpose of Document:

This is Appendix 6 of a document that has been drawn up by a task and finish group to provide guidance to public health professionals on the prevention and investigation of cases of cryptosporidiosis linked to swimming pools in England and Wales.

#### Summary of document:

This Appendix provides advice that can be given to cryptosporidiosis cases or their carers.

**Work Plan reference: Cryptosporidium Reference Unit 2010/11**

*Cryptosporidium* is a parasite (a tiny organism) that causes an illness called cryptosporidiosis. The main symptom is watery diarrhoea. *Cryptosporidium* can affect people, livestock, wild animals, and pets. *Cryptosporidium* is found in lakes, streams and rivers, untreated drinking water and sometimes in swimming pools or food.

### **Who is at risk?**

Anyone can get cryptosporidiosis, but it is most common in children aged between one and five years. People who care for, or work with children or animals are more at risk than others. For most people, the illness is unpleasant but self-limiting. However, it can be a serious illness in people who have immune systems that are not working properly.

Please let the person giving you these advice notes know about any other illnesses/conditions you have and any medication you are currently taking.

### **How do you get cryptosporidiosis?**

You can get cryptosporidiosis directly from another person or animal by touching their faeces (for example when changing a nappy) and putting your hands near or in your mouth without washing them thoroughly. You can also get cryptosporidiosis by drinking or swimming in contaminated water. Occasionally you can be infected by eating or drinking contaminated food, particularly unpasteurised milk or fresh produce.

### **How can you avoid getting cryptosporidiosis?**

Wash your hands thoroughly with soap and warm water:

- before preparing and eating food
- after handling raw food
- after going to the toilet, helping someone else use the toilet, or changing a baby's nappy
- after working, feeding, grooming or playing with pets and other animals.

Do not drink untreated water.

Do not use ice or drinking water in countries where the water supply might be unsafe.

Always wash and/or peel fruits and vegetables before eating them.

Do not go swimming if you have diarrhoea.

If you have had cryptosporidiosis do not go swimming until you have been clear of diarrhoea for at least two weeks.

Avoid swallowing water in lakes and swimming pools.

You should pay special attention to hygiene during farm visits, washing hands after any contact with animals, and eating only in designated areas.

Cryptosporidiosis is highly infectious so you need to be scrupulously clean around your home. Clean toilet seats, toilet bowls, flush handles, taps and wash hand basins after use.

Make sure all members of your household wash their hands thoroughly with soap and hot water after going to the toilet and after handling soiled clothing or bedding.

Make sure that everyone has their own towel and that they do not use anybody else's. Wash all soiled clothes and linen on as hot a machine wash as possible.

### **What are the symptoms of cryptosporidiosis and how long do they last?**

The most common symptoms are watery diarrhoea, vomiting, stomach pains, and fever which may only last a couple of days, but which can continue for up to three or four weeks. It can affect people with weak immune systems for much longer. You might think that you are getting better and have shaken off the infection but then find that you get worse before the illness eventually goes. Dehydration and weight loss are less common, but can occur if your body is unable to take in enough nutrients and water from your food, for example if the vomiting or diarrhoea is very severe or continues for a long time. As symptoms are similar to many other infections, the only way to make an accurate diagnosis is for a sample of your faeces to be tested in a laboratory.

### **How do you treat cryptosporidiosis?**

There is no specific treatment for cryptosporidiosis. Most people with a healthy immune system will recover within one month.

It is important to drink plenty of fluids as diarrhoea or vomiting can lead to dehydration and you can lose important sugars and minerals from your body. Your doctor may recommend a re-hydration solution, available from your pharmacist.

If you feel sick, try taking small sips of fluid, frequently.  
Avoid alcohol.

A simple painkiller can help with abdominal cramps. Talk to your GP or pharmacist who can advise you on the most appropriate painkiller for you.

**Do I need to stay off work or school?**

Yes. While you are ill and have symptoms you are infectious. You should not return to work or school until you have been free from diarrhoea and/or vomiting for 48 hours.

You should tell your employer you have had cryptosporidiosis if you work with vulnerable groups such as the elderly, the young, those in poor health, or if you handle food.

If you have concerns about your health call NHS 111 or NHS Direct Wales 0845 4647, visit their websites <https://111.nhs.uk> or [NHS 111 Wales](#) , or see your family doctor.

If you have any further questions, please contact

[Local Authority]