

# If someone in your household has crypto

- The infected person should not prepare food.
- Soiled bedding and clothes should be washed on the hot cycle of your washing machine.
- If you have more than one toilet in your household ask the infected person to use one toilet and the rest of the household to use the other.
- Clean surfaces (toilet seats, flush handles, door handles and taps) at least daily with bleach, diluted as per manufacturer's instructions.
- If cleaning up diarrhoea or vomit, wear rubber gloves; wash the surface with hot soapy water, rinse and allow to dry. Use paper towels or disposable cloths. Dispose of used cloths immediately in a plastic bag.
- The infected person should not share towels/ flannels with anyone.
- Those with crypto must avoid swimming for a further two weeks after their symptoms have resolved. Following the infection people can excrete Crypto oocytes, the oocytes can infect water and cause a risk to other people.

## Useful Information

NHS Inform [www.nhsinform.scot](http://www.nhsinform.scot)  
Food Standards Agency [www.food.gov.uk](http://www.food.gov.uk)  
NHS 24 [www.nhs24.scot](http://www.nhs24.scot)  
Freephone 111

## Further information and help

For further information please contact your GP.

## We are listening - how did we do?

We welcome your feedback, as it helps us evaluate the services we provide. If you would like to tell us about your experience:

- speak to a member of staff
- visit our website [www.wihb.scot.nhs.uk/feedback](http://www.wihb.scot.nhs.uk/feedback) or share your story at: [www.careopinion.org.uk](http://www.careopinion.org.uk) or tel. 0800 122 31 35
- tel. 01851 704704 (ext 2236) Monday-Friday between 10am-4pm.

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### Disclaimer

The content of this leaflet is intended to augment, not replace, information provided by your clinician. It is not intended nor implied to be a substitute for professional medical advice. Reading this information does not create or replace a doctor-patient relationship or consultation. If required, please contact your doctor or other health care provider to assist you to interpret any of this information, or in applying the information to your individual needs.

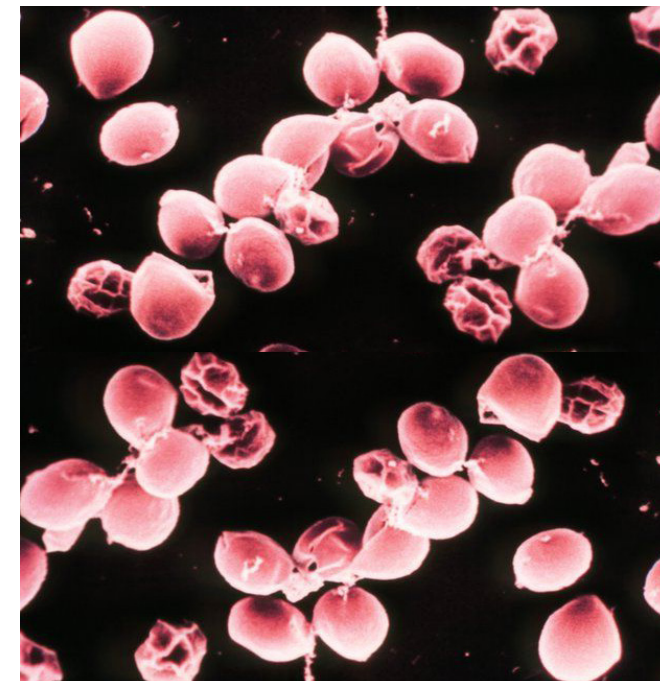
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Bòrd SSN nan Eilean Siar  
NHS Western Isles

Health Protection Team

# Cryptosporidiosis



Patient information leaflet

## What is Cryptosporidiosis?

Cryptosporidiosis is a diarrhoeal illness caused by a parasite called cryptosporidium. Both the disease and the parasite are commonly known as 'Crypto'.

Crypto lives in the guts of many mammals, most often in their newborn, particularly lambs and calves.

Millions of crypto can be released in a bowel movement from an infected animal (or human). Crypto may be found in the soil, food, water, or surfaces that have been contaminated with the faeces of infected animals and humans. It can also spread and contaminate water sources like lochs and rivers.

## What illness results from infection?

The incubation period (the time from first swallowing the crypto to becoming ill) is normally 2-10 days.

Illness may start with loss of appetite, nausea and abdominal pain. This is followed by profuse watery diarrhoea, vomiting (in children), and mild fever.

In otherwise healthy people the illness lasts for about 2 weeks. However, if you have a weakened immune system you are at risk of more severe illness.

## Should I contact my GP?

You should consult your GP if one or more of the following applies to you:

- if your immune system is not working properly, for example due to cancer treatment or HIV
- there is blood in your diarrhoea
- you have severe abdominal pain
- the diarrhoea has lasted for 48 hours.

## How are infections treated?

Most people recover without any specific treatment. Extra fluids are important, especially for babies, children, pregnant women and the elderly. Clear fluids like water and diluted fruit juice are recommended.

All persons with diarrhoea should remain off work or school until they have had no symptoms for 48 hours and should refrain from swimming for 2 weeks.

## How does it spread?

- Directly from contact with an infected animal or person.
- By swallowing contaminated water from swimming pools, lochs or burns.
- By eating uncooked foods contaminated with crypto.
- By drinking unpasteurised milk.
- In contaminated drinking water. Crypto has a very protective outer shell that stops the chlorine in our water from killing it.

## How can infection be prevented?

- Wash hands thoroughly after contact with all animals and their faeces; after using the toilet or changing nappies.
- Avoid drinking water from burns and lochs.
- If swimming in open water, avoid swallowing water.
- Avoid using ice or drinking untreated water when travelling in countries where the water supply may be unsafe.
- Don't go swimming if you have diarrhoea. If your baby has been ill, wait until their nappies have been back to normal for two weeks before going swimming.

## How should hands be washed?

- Always use warm, running water and a mild, preferably liquid, soap. (It is not essential to use soaps labelled as antiseptic or antibacterial.)
- Wet hands and apply a small amount of soap.
- Rub hands together vigorously for 20 seconds. Pay special attention to areas between fingers, finger tips and palms.
- Rinse hands under warm running water and dry thoroughly on a clean dry towel.