

September 13, 2007

HEALTH ADVISORY AND ALERT

Dear Daycare Provider:

Southwest District Health (SWDH) has noted an increase in the number of Cryptosporidiosis (Crypto) cases reported to the health department since the beginning of August. The average number of Cryptosporidiosis cases reported annually to SWDH is 3 per year; SWDH has received 48 reports of Cryptosporidiosis since August 1, 2007. Whereas the outbreak has primarily been identified in Ada and Canyon Counties, cases have been reported across the state from multiple sources. Utah and Colorado are also seeing significant increases.

Cryptosporidiosis is a diarrhea disease caused by a tiny parasite associated with swimming in recreational waters including lakes, rivers, canals, swimming pools, water parks, and splash fountains. It is usually spread by swallowing water that has been contaminated with human stool or animal waste, usually in amounts too small to be seen. Once a person or animal is infected, the parasite lives in the intestine and passes in the stool and can be spread for up to two weeks after symptoms subside. Children who attend day care and child care workers are at increased risk of becoming infected with this parasite.

Crypto, known as a recreational water illness is especially resilient that can live for days even in a properly chlorinated pool. The regular chemicals used to kill germs in swimming pools and other water is not effective in killing this parasite. Anyone experiencing diarrhea should not swim, use a wading pool, or common kiddy pool for at least two weeks after diarrhea symptoms have stopped.

Because Crypto can be easily spread in child care settings, the health district is advising child care providers, and the parents of children in those facilities, that children exhibiting diarrhea to be excluded from child care facilities until 24 hours after their diarrhea subsides. If child care workers are experiencing diarrhea, they should also be excluded from working until 24 hours after their

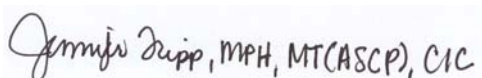
diarrhea subsides. Children and day care workers who have been diagnosed with *Cryptosporidium* should not return to day care until 2 stool samples collected at least 24 hours apart are negative for *Cryptosporidium* or have not experience any diarrhea for twenty-four hours. Should diarrhea reoccur, the child or worker must not return to the day care until twenty-four hours after that diarrhea episode has ceased. In addition, child care employees need to be especially vigilant about hand washing and routine cleaning of toys and diaper-changing areas. Young children and pregnant women may be more susceptible to dehydration and should drink plenty of fluids if ill.

The best way to protect yourself and others from this water-borne illness is to practice good hygiene, as follows:

- Don't swim when you have diarrhea, especially important for kids in diapers. Wait for an additional two weeks after the diarrhea symptoms have stopped before swimming again, even if the pool is chlorinated. Crypto is highly resistant to chlorine
- Don't swallow water while swimming. In fact, avoid getting water in your mouth.
- Practice good hygiene. Take a shower before swimming and wash hands after using the toilet or changing diapers. Germs on your body can end up in the water
- Take children on bathroom breaks and check diapers often, especially when swimming.
- Change diapers in a bathroom and not at pool side and wash children thoroughly with soap and water before swimming.

Enclosed are information sheets explaining the facts about cryptosporidiosis and handwashing information that will help prevent the spread of this disease. Additionally, a handout explaining the Center for Disease Control's (CDC) recommendations for rehydration following illness has also been included. Please reproduce as many of these pages as you like.

Anyone who has diarrhea that lasts for more than one day, is bloody, or is accompanied by a fever, should contact their health care provider. Should you have questions related to any of the enclosed information, please contact Southwest District Health at 455-5442.



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