



Cerro Gordo County Department of Public Health

NEWS RELEASE

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Health Department Confirms Cases of Cryptosporidiosis in County

(Mason City) — The Cerro Gordo County Department of Public Health continues to see an increase in cases of Cryptosporidiosis (Crypto). Cryptosporidium is a parasite causing diarrhea. It is found in the feces (stool) of an infected person or animal. Individuals become ill with the parasite by putting something in their mouth that has been contaminated with the stool from an infected person or animal. It can also spread by swallowing contaminated food or water. To date, there are a total of 90 CONFIRMED cases of crypto in our county alone.

“We need to work together as a community to stop the spread of this parasite,” said Brian Hanft, Environmental Health Service Manager, for the Cerro Gordo County Department of Public Health. “It is critical that individuals who are showing symptoms of crypto are tested and seek education on how to protect others.”

The most common crypto symptoms are watery diarrhea partnered with stomach cramps. Other symptoms can include: headache, nausea, vomiting and a low-grade fever.

“Crypto is highly contagious and the parasite is hard to kill,” explains Jeni Stiles, Infectious Disease Nurse, for the Cerro Gordo County Department of Public Health. **“Persons infected with crypto should not return to school, daycare, or work until you are diarrhea free for 24 hours.”**

To prevent the spread of crypto, follow the instructions below:

- **Hand sanitizers DO NOT kill crypto.** Always wash hands thoroughly with soap and water before handling food or eating, after using the toilet or changing diapers, and after contact with animals, especially cattle.
- **Crypto is resistant to bleach.** If someone is diagnosed with crypto, use 3% hydrogen peroxide (commonly found in a brown bottle) to clean common surface areas within the home.
- Dispose of feces such as dirty diapers in a sanitary manner, especially in child care centers or other institutional settings.
- **Children with diarrhea should remain out of child care settings until the diarrhea has stopped. (Should we include this again since we already did above?? Might a good way to reemphasize...)**
- Persons should stop using swimming pools or other aquatic facilities while ill and for at least 2 weeks after diarrhea resolves. People can pass the parasite in stool and contaminate water for weeks after symptoms have stopped.
- Persons with diarrhea should not prepare food until it has resolved.

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“If you or your children are experiencing crypto symptoms, please help protect our community by staying home and following the instructions above,” states Brian Hanft. “It’s the only way we can get this to end.”

For more information about cryptosporidiosis, please call the Cerro Gordo County Department of Public Health at (641) 421-9340.

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