

# Pool of Knowledge

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## Facts about Cryptosporidiosis and Swimming Pools

With summer in full swing, many of us enjoy swimming. Although we are enjoying the pool, we may be at risk for contracting *Cryptosporidium*. This is a diarrheal disease caused by the microscopic parasite *Cryptosporidium*. Both the parasite and the disease are commonly known as "Crypto." The parasite is extremely resistant to chlorine due to the fact that it is protected by an outer shell, allowing it to survive outside of the host body for extended amounts of time. The most common symptom of Crypto is watery diarrhea. Other symptoms include stomach cramps, nausea, vomiting, dehydration, fever, and weight loss. Some people may not have symptoms at all but they still can pass the disease to others.



Crypto is one of the most frequent causes of waterborne disease in the United States; every year there are approximately 748,000 Crypto cases. Crypto lives in the intestines of humans or animals. An infected person sheds the *Cryptosporidium* parasite in the stool. Millions of Crypto parasites can be released in a single bowel movement. The shedding of the parasite begins when the symptoms start and can last for weeks after the symptoms stop. Crypto is not spread by contact with blood. Crypto can be spread by:

- Putting something in your mouth or accidentally swallowing something that has come in contact with the stool of a person or animal infected with Crypto.
- Swallowing recreational water contaminated with Crypto. Recreational water can be contaminated with sewage or feces from humans or animals.
- Swallowing water or beverages contaminated by stool from infected humans or animals.
- Eating uncooked food contaminated with Crypto. All fruits and vegetables you plan to eat raw should be thoroughly washed with uncontaminated water.
- Touching your mouth with contaminated hands. Hands can become contaminated through a variety of activities, such as touching surfaces (e.g., toys, bathroom fixtures, changing tables, diaper pails) that have been contaminated by:
  - Stool from an infected person,
  - Changing diapers, or
  - Caring for an infected person.

People with greater exposure to contaminated materials are more at risk for infection, such as:

- People, including swimmers, who drink or swallow water from contaminated sources.
- Children who attend childcare centers, including diaper-aged children.
- Childcare workers.
- Parents of infected children.

What can be done to prevent this disease? Follow these tips:

- Do not swallow water from pools.
- Do not swim if you have diarrhea (especially for children in diapers). If you have been diagnosed with Crypto, do not swim for at least 2 weeks after the diarrhea has stopped.
- Shower before entering the pool or spa.
- Change diapers in the bathroom, not at the poolside. Take children on frequent bathroom breaks and check their diapers often.

Check out our [Cryptosporidium](#) fact sheet to learn how to prevent these waterborne diseases.

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## Weekend Maintenance



This is a friendly reminder that your public pool or spa should receive daily care. The weather has been extremely hot lately, so people are trying to stay cool. Pools and spas are used a lot during the weekend, so remember to check chemical levels and other maintenance issues, even on weekend days.

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## Floating Pool Covers

Floating pool covers are blankets designed to float directly on the water surface to prevent heat loss, water evaporation and to keep debris out of a pool. Floating pool covers are not "safety covers". The pool must be separated from all dwelling units by an approved fence or enclosure. Floating pool covers are not allowed at courtyard pools or in other situations where there is not a fence or enclosure between the living units and the pool. The pool must be under the supervision of management personnel or other responsible person(s) who has sole access to the pool area when it is not open for use. The pool area must be locked to prevent any use of the pool when the cover is in place. The pool may not be reopened for use until the pool cover has been removed from the pool and properly stored by the responsible party. The pool cover, when not in use, must be completely removed, rolled up, and stored at least four feet away from the pool. In the case of spa pools, the cover must be physically removed from the immediate premises to prevent swimmers from re-covering the spa pool. The pool cover must meet current American Society for Testing and Materials (ASTM) labeling.



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*If you have any questions or comments, please contact Scott Stanley, Health Education Specialist II at 800-442-2283 or [Scott.Stanley@dph.sbcounty.gov](mailto:Scott.Stanley@dph.sbcounty.gov).*

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**We appreciate the effort you make to protect the public's health in our County.**