



## *Cryptosporidium* Prevention—General Public

### Practice good hygiene.

1. Wash hands thoroughly and frequently with soap and water.
  - a. Wash hands after using the toilet and before handling or eating food (especially for persons with diarrhea).
  - b. Wash hands after every diaper change, especially if you work with diaper-aged children, even if you are wearing gloves.
2. Protect others by not swimming if you are experiencing diarrhea (this is essential for children in diapers). Swimming is not recommended for at least 2 weeks after diarrhea stops.

### Avoid water that might be contaminated.

1. Do not swallow recreational water. For information on recreational water-related illnesses, visit CDC's Healthy Swimming Web site at <http://www.cdc.gov/healthyswimming>.
2. Do not drink untreated water from shallow wells, lakes, rivers, springs, ponds, and streams.
3. Do not drink untreated water during community-wide outbreaks of disease caused by contaminated drinking water.
4. Do not drink tap water that has not been boiled or ice that has not been made from boiled water when the public health department advises boiling water (boil water advisory).
5. Do not use or consume untreated ice or tap water when traveling in countries where the water supply might be unsafe.

In the United States, nationally distributed brands of bottled or canned carbonated soft drinks are safe to drink. Commercially packaged non-carbonated soft drinks and fruit juices that do not require refrigeration until after they are opened (those that are stored unrefrigerated on grocery shelves) also are safe. For information on choosing safe bottled water, see CDC's A Guide to Commercially-Bottled Water and Other Beverages at <http://www.cdc.gov/crypto/factsheets/bottled.html>.

If you are unable to avoid using or drinking water that might be contaminated, then you can treat the water for *Cryptosporidium* by doing one of the following:

- Heat the water to a rolling boil for at least 1 minute. **OR**
- Use a filter that has an absolute pore size of 1 micron or smaller, or one that has been NSF rated for "cyst removal." For information on choosing a water filter, see CDC's A Guide to Water Filters at <http://www.cdc.gov/crypto/factsheets/filters.html>.

Do not rely on chemicals to disinfect water and kill *Cryptosporidium*. Because it has a thick outer shell, this particular parasite is highly resistant to disinfectants such as chlorine and iodine.

### Avoid food that might be contaminated.

1. Use safe, uncontaminated water to wash all food that is to be eaten raw.
2. After washing vegetables and fruit in safe, uncontaminated water, peel them if you plan to eat them raw.
3. Avoid eating uncooked foods when traveling in countries with minimal water treatment and sanitation systems.

**Take extra care when traveling.**

If you travel to developing nations, you may be at a greater risk for Crypto because of poorer water treatment and food sanitation. Warnings about food, drinks, and swimming are especially important in such settings. Foods and beverages, in particular raw fruits and vegetables, tap water, ice made from tap water, unpasteurized milk or dairy products, and items purchased from street vendors might be contaminated. Steaming-hot foods, fruits you peel yourself, bottled and canned processed drinks, and hot coffee or hot tea are probably safe. Talk with your health care provider about other guidelines for travel abroad. For more information see <http://www.cdc.gov/crypto/travelers.html>.

**Avoid fecal exposure during sexual activity.**

Infected people may have Crypto on their skin in the anal and genital areas, including the thighs and buttocks. However, since you cannot tell if someone has Crypto, you may want to take these precautions with any sex partner. Avoid sexual practices that might result in oral exposure to stool (e.g., oral-anal contact).

*This fact sheet is for information only and is not meant to be used for self-diagnosis or as a substitute for consultation with a health care provider. If you have any questions about the disease described above or think that you may have a parasitic infection, consult a health care provider.*

*From <http://www.cdc.gov/cyrpto/factsheets/prevent.html>*

