

What during 1976-
1982, the disease
was reported rarely



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What we as a society do collectively to assure the conditions in which people can live productive and vigorous lives. Public Health does things that benefit everyone. It also prevents illness and educates the population. Public Health is a combination of science, practical skills and beliefs that is directed to the maintenance and improvement of the health of people. The science and art of preventing disease, prolonging life and promoting physical health and efficiency through organized community efforts.

Cryptosporidium Parvum has been recognized as a human pathogen since 1976. During 1976-1982, the disease was reported rarely and occurred predominantly in immunocompromised persons. In 1982, the number of reported cases began to increase as a result of acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (AIDS). *Cryptosporidium Parvum* is a one-cell parasite, which causes the disease cryptosporidiosis. Cryptosporidiosis is an intestinal illness caused by a microscopic parasite called *cryptosporidium*.

The parasite is transmitted by ingestion of oocysts excreted in the feces of infected humans or animals. The infection can therefore be transmitted from person-to-person, through ingestion of contaminated water or food, from animal to person, or by contact with fecally contaminated environmental surfaces. *Cryptosporidium* can be found on clothing, bedding, or other things used by infected persons, such as a person with diarrhea or children in diapers. Sex that may involve contact with stool, especially oral sex, can also pass cryptosporidia. The stool of domestic and farm animals, especially animals less than six months old or animals with diarrhea, can contain *cryptosporidium*. Individuals should always wash their hands after touching animals or cleaning up their stool or visiting barns and areas where these

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animals live. Also in women, when cleaning yourself after movement of bowels, wipe front to back to avoid fecal contact with the vagina and urethra.

The most common symptom is diarrhea, which is usually watery which is often accompanied by abdominal cramping, nausea, vomiting, fever, headache and loss of appetite may also occur. Some people with cryptosporidium may be asymptomatic. The incubation period may range from one to twelve days with an average of seven days. Sources of cryptosporidium are; people, cows, cats, mice, turkeys, chickens, monkeys, sheep, goats, rabbits, fish, reptiles, opossums, and birds. As of November 16, 1999 cryptosporidium parvum effected thirty six people within the state of New Jersey; 2 in Atlantic county, 4 in Bergen county, 5 in Burlington county, 5 in Camden county, 2 in Cape may, 2 in Essex county, 1 in Hudson county, 1 in Hunterdon county, 4 in Middlesex county, 4 in Monmouth county, 2 in Morris county, 2 in Ocean county, 2 in Passaic county, 2 in Union county, and 1 in Sussex county. The most common transmission for these effected persons in NJ is person to person contact, fecal to oral contact, and homosexual males.

No one has ever died from this illness in NJ but some of these people have been hospitalized for observation and to be exact it is not something else. Day care centers have to be exceptionally careful because of younger children who wear diapers. Changing a baby who may be infected can make the handler at risk if the fecal matter was met.

In 1994 there was a reported 2,070 estimated cases in Lake Nummy, NJ suspected cause was from contaminated shallow Lake park. Today there is no vaccination or medicine for this illness. If infected, contact your medical

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practitioner for immediate diagnosis. There are precautions that we as a community can do. As a community we can: ? Use a water filter; unless it is distilled or pasteurized, bottled water may not be any safer than tap water. Using a water filter that has the words "reverse osmosis" on the label protect against crypto. Some "absolute 1 micron" and most "nominal 1 micron" filters will not work against crypto.

? Boiling water for at least one minute with a rolling boil will kill cryptosporidium. ? Properly drilled and maintained wells that utilize underground water are generally protected from surface contamination and are unlikely to contain cryptosporidium oocysts. ? Practice safer sex. (Rimming) kissing or licking the anus. ? Be careful when swimming in lakes, rivers, or pools, and when using hot tubs.

? Avoid touching farm animals and stool of pets. ? Wash hands thoroughly before and after handling food. ? Food that would be eaten uncooked should be washed well, peel skin off, and then eaten. ? Do not eat or drink unpasteurized milk or dairy products. There have been numerous outbreaks of crypto but the one that affected the most people was in Milwaukee.

In 1993 cryptosporidiosis affected more than