



PUBLIC HEALTH ADVISORY
Increase in Cryptosporidiosis Cases

September 7, 2007

The Southern Nevada Health District is advising the community of an increase in the number of cases of cryptosporidiosis (Crypto) in the community. Crypto is a contagious, parasitic infection found in the stools of infected individuals that causes diarrhea. It can be spread from person-to person and it is commonly spread at recreational aquatic facilities. Currently, there are seven confirmed cases that have been reported in Clark County since August 1 and there are additional outbreaks in Colorado, Idaho, Iowa and Utah as well as several other states. The last outbreak in the Las Vegas area occurred in 1994.

Crypto can be spread by swallowing recreational water contaminated with the parasite. Sources can include swimming pools, hot tubs, Jacuzzis, rivers, lakes, springs, ponds, streams or other water sources. Additional sources of transmission occur by ingesting something that has come into contact with the stool of an infected person or animal or touching a contaminated surface and then touching your mouth.

Symptoms include profuse, watery diarrhea, low-grade fever, abdominal pain and weight loss, and can appear one to 12 days following exposure. The illness can last from one to 20 days in healthy individuals, including children. Infected individuals can spread the illness for several weeks after symptoms resolve. It is also recommended that they refrain from visiting swimming pools for approximately two weeks after symptoms resolve.

Although the illness can infect all people, young children, pregnant women and individuals with weakened immune systems are at risk for more serious disease.

To minimize the risks of contracting the illness, the health district recommends good hygiene practices:

- Thorough hand washing with soap and warm water before and after using the restroom, changing diapers, handling food, or playing with pets
- Do not drink water directly from lakes, rivers or untreated water sources
- Maintain sufficient chlorine levels in pools

People who exhibit symptoms of Crypto should avoid close contact with others, and refrain from attending school and work. In addition, they and their family members and household contact should carry out good hand washing and hygiene practices. Contaminated surfaces should be disinfected immediately with household chlorine bleach-based cleaners and any soiled articles of clothing or linens should be washed promptly. Contaminated food or water should be avoided.

For more information, visit the Southern Nevada Health District website, www.SouthernNevadaHealthDistrict.org or call the Office of Epidemiology, (702) 759-1300.

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