

# Cryptosporidium Information Sheet

*Cryptosporidium* is diagnosed as cryptosporidiosis, a diarrheal disease caused by a parasite. Its symptoms include loss of appetite, nausea, vomiting, and diarrhea (which can last 1-2 weeks). It can also cause dehydration in young children, pregnant women and other vulnerable populations. People who experience these symptoms should contact their medical provider.

Tarrant County Public Health recommends the following measures:

## **Help protect yourself, your family and others in recreational swimming areas.**

- Do not swim when you are ill with diarrhea or for two weeks after your diarrhea has stopped. *Cryptosporidium* is chlorine resistant.
- Do not swallow the water when you swim or wade in pool/lake/river water. Avoid getting water in your mouth.
- Practice good hygiene (i.e., shower before swimming).
- Please take children on bathroom breaks or check diapers often. Waiting to hear “I need to go,” may mean that it is too late.
- Please change diapers in a bathroom or a diaper-changing area and not at poolside.
- Germs can be spread to surfaces and objects in and around the pool and cause illness.
- Please wash children thoroughly (especially in the diaper region) with soap and water before swimming.

## **In household, day-care facilities and other settings, use proper hygiene.**

- Wash hands regularly, especially after using the bathroom and before preparing food. Hand washing is the most effective means of preventing *Cryptosporidium* transmission.
- Observe children as they wash their hands and assist when needed.
- Wash children’s hands when they arrive at day care, after they use the toilet, after having their diaper changed and before eating snacks or meals.
- Wash hands after changing diapers.
  - Take extra care to wash hands and clean surfaces if caring for someone with diarrhea, especially diaper-or-toddler-age children.

**NOTE:** *Cryptosporidium* is not killed by alcohol gels and hand sanitizers. Soap and clean running water are specifically recommended for preventing cryptosporidiosis.

