



North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services  
Division of Public Health

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December 19, 2013

TO: North Carolina Competitive Pool Operators and Swim Team Coaches  
FROM: Megan Davies, MD, State Epidemiologist *MD*  
Bart Campbell, Acting Chief, Environmental Health Section *BC*  
RE: Outbreak of Cryptosporidiosis

Over the past few weeks, several laboratory-confirmed cases of cryptosporidiosis have been identified among swim team participants in the Triangle area. These cases were originally linked to a single club swim team, but additional cases have since been identified among members of other swim teams.

*Cryptosporidium* is a microscopic parasite that causes the diarrheal disease cryptosporidiosis. The most common symptoms are watery diarrhea and stomach cramps. Illness can be severe in some groups. Both the parasite and the disease are commonly known as "crypto." Millions of crypto germs are released in the bowel movements of an infected person and can survive in water for days even if chlorine levels are maintained at recommended levels. Shedding of crypto in the stool can last for weeks after the symptoms (e.g., diarrhea) stop.

Since winter is a busy season for competitive swimming, we are asking all swim teams and pool operators whose pools are used for swim meets or training to be aware of this outbreak and to take the following steps to avoid additional illnesses. Your cooperation is needed to avoid cancellation of meets or the need to implement other control measures.

**Swim team coaches:**

Provide the following guidance to all participants and parents:

1. STAY OUT OF THE POOL if you are experiencing diarrhea.
2. If you suspect that you have crypto, see your health care provider.
3. If your stool test is positive for crypto, you must STAY OUT OF THE POOL FOR TWO WEEKS after your diarrhea stops.
4. If you have symptoms and have had contact with another person with crypto (e.g. another participant on the same swim team), you must STAY OUT OF THE POOL FOR TWO WEEKS after your diarrhea stops.

**Competitive pool operators:**

1. Reinforce diarrhea-exclusion policies for patrons and staff by posting messages where patrons can easily see and read them. In addition, alert coaches to suspend swimmers ill with diarrhea.
2. Immediately hyperchlorinate your pool when someone diagnosed or suspected of having crypto has been in the pool. Consider weekly hyperchlorination of the pool if the health department has identified an outbreak in your area. CDC recommendations for hyperchlorination to kill *Cryptosporidium* are available at <http://www.cdc.gov/healthywater/swimming/pools/disinfection-remediation-pools-hot-tubs.html>.

We appreciate your ongoing efforts to keep pools safe and healthy. Please feel free to contact your local health department or call the Communicable Disease Branch at 919-733-3419 or Environmental Health at 919-707-5873.

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