

Technical Information:

Date: 06/08/05
Subject: Cryptosporidium
Product: Bacteria

Cryptosporidium enteritis is an infection of the small intestine that is caused by the parasite cryptosporidium.

Once an animal or person is infected, the parasite lives in the intestine and passes in the stool. The parasite is protected by an outer shell that allows it to survive outside the body for long periods of time and makes it very resistant to chlorine- based disinfectants. Both the disease and the parasite are commonly known as "crypto." The major risk factor is ingestion of fecally contaminated water.

During the past two decades, crypto has become recognized as one of the most common causes of waterborne disease within humans in the North America. The parasite may be found in drinking water and recreational water in every region of North America and throughout the world.

Cryptosporidium is found in soil, food, water, or surfaces that have been contaminated with infected human or animal feces. If a person swallows the parasite they become infected.

Removal of Cryptosporidium requires a water filter with an "absolute" pore size of 0.1 to 1-micrometer and may also remove most other diarrhea-causing bacteria. Once water is filtered it is best to follow with chlorine or iodine to kill remaining bacteria and viruses.