



## Cryptosporidiosis (*Crypto*)

### What is Cryptosporidiosis?

- 💧 Cryptosporidiosis is a gut infection, caused by the **parasite**, *Cryptosporidium parvum*.
- 💧 The symptoms appear within 1 to 12 days after infection and mainly consist of watery diarrhoea and stomach pains.
- 💧 Other symptoms are vomiting and slight fever.
- 💧 Healthy people can recover from such an infection after 1 to 2 weeks.
- 💧 For HIV positive patients the recovery period may be much longer and the infection can even be fatal.
- 💧 Anyone with a poor immunity system will be more prone to catch the disease

### How is Cryptosporidiosis transmitted?

- 💧 Infection occurs with ingestion of contaminated drinking water and contaminated food, as well as through person-to-person contact.
- 💧 Sometimes animals can serve as a bacterium reservoir and transmission can then be via the animal faeces.

### How can Cryptosporidiosis patients be treated?

- 💧 These parasites are not readily destroyed by medication.
- 💧 Only the symptoms can be treated. Anti-diarrhoeal medication can be taken to diminish the diarrhoeal phase and so restrict dehydration to the minimum.
- 💧 Once the diarrhoea is stopped, rehydration treatment to replace lost fluids and salts.
- 💧 Infections are usually self-limited in people with healthy immune systems.

### How can Cryptosporidiosis be prevented?

- 💧 Filter drinking water with an extremely small pore size filter (0,1 to 1.0 micrometer) or boil the water for at least one minute.
- 💧 Chlorination with household bleach does not kill the parasites.
- 💧 Only very strong UV light will kill the parasites.
- 💧 Good personal hygiene and proper sanitation are essential.
- 💧 People with poor immune systems, must always wash their fruit and vegetables well with clean or boiled and cooled water and they must refrain from touching animals, especially lambs and calves without washing their hands

Reference: DWAF (2003). Management of water-related microbial diseases, Vol. 1.

Photo: Credit – pixabay/wikipedia

