


Cryptosporidiosis & Competitive Swim Teams

Talking Points/Tips for Swim Coaches

Should You Swim While Sick with Diarrhea?

The first question to ask yourself while sick is, “should I swim?” If you have diarrhea, the answer is simple -- **DO NOT SWIM!!!**

Swimming with diarrhea can infect the entire pool with cryptosporidiosis (often referred to as “crypto”) and may get your teammates sick, as well as anybody else that swims in the pool.

Tips to  the spread of crypto – discuss tips as a team.

- Do not swim if you have diarrhea.
- Wait for two weeks after the diarrhea has stopped to swim.
- Take a “cleansing shower” before swimming – small amounts of fecal material left on your bottom and other germs on your body will end up in the pool if a shower is not taken.
- A “cleansing shower” includes: soap, warm water, scrubbing (focus on getting your bottom clean), and rinsing off completely.
- Wash your hands (with soap & warm water) after using the bathroom.
- Do not swallow swimming pool water. Avoid getting it into your mouth.



Over the past two decades, the microscopic parasite *Cryptosporidium* (which causes crypto) has become recognized as one of the most common causes of waterborne disease in humans in the United States.

Crypto is introduced into the pool by the feces of an infected person. Crypto causes severe watery diarrhea that lasts for 1-2 weeks. Because the diarrhea is watery, an infected individual could have a diarrheal accident while in the pool and no one would notice.

Just one diarrheal release from a person infected with crypto can contain up to 1,000,000,000 (1-billion) crypto parasites. This can contaminate the entire pool. Normal pool chlorine levels cannot kill crypto, so the parasite can live in the swimming pool (infecting other swimmers) for several days. A person can easily become infected with crypto by accidentally swallowing pool water or by getting the pool water into his or her mouth.

When your body is fighting an infection such as crypto, your performance and fitness benefits from a workout will be less than optimal. Missing a few days of swimming is not the end of the world.