



## News Release

**For Immediate Release:**

Tuesday, Sept. 11, 2007

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### **Swimming Restrictions Extended for Kids Under Age Five**

*More than 1,300 cases reported statewide*

(Salt Lake City, UT) – The Utah Department of Health (UDOH) along with several local health departments today extended swimming restrictions for children under the age of five as well as requirements for scheduled pool treatments for an additional two weeks. The restrictions were originally announced on Aug. 28 to control a statewide outbreak of cryptosporidiosis, an infection caused by a parasite that causes long-lasting, often debilitating diarrhea. Since the intervention was implemented, cases have continued to be reported in substantial numbers. At this point, public health officials have been unable to determine whether the restrictions have been effective in controlling the outbreak.

“We’re experiencing a lag of approximately 18 days from when an individual is initially exposed to when the diagnosis is confirmed and reported to the state,” said Dr. Robert Rolfs, UDOH state epidemiologist. “Given that timeline, we feel it’s best to leave the restrictions in place for two more weeks so we can more accurately determine the effectiveness of the restrictions.”

The restrictions are in place for public swimming pools under the jurisdictions of the following health departments: Bear River (Box Elder, Cache and Rich counties), Central Utah (Juab, Millard, Piute, Sanpete, Sevier, Wayne counties), Davis County, Salt Lake Valley, Southeast Utah (Carbon, Emery, Grand, San Juan counties), Summit County, Tooele County, Utah County, Wasatch County and Weber-Morgan.

In a normal year, Utah generally sees about 30 cases of crypto throughout the state. As of Monday, Sept. 10, UDOH has confirmed 1,302 cases so far this year. The parasite is most commonly spread through swimming pools; however, public health officials have noticed an increase in the numbers of cases spread from person-to-person.

“It’s important for the public to realize this illness can be spread by means other than swimming in a public pool,” said Ilene Risk, epidemiology bureau manager for the SLVHD. “If you have a family member who is sick, it’s important to practice good hygiene so the illness is not spread from person-to-person.”

In addition to the swimming recommendations listed below, people who have diarrhea that might be due to cryptosporidiosis should wash their hands thoroughly with soap and water, especially after using the toilet and before handling or eating food, and after every diaper change, especially if you work or live with diaper-aged children, even if you are wearing gloves.

Although crypto can infect anyone, these groups are more likely to develop more serious illness:

- Young children and pregnant women may be more susceptible to the dehydration resulting from diarrhea and should drink plenty of fluids while ill.
- Anyone with a severely weakened immune system is at risk for more serious disease and should refrain from swimming until the outbreak is over. The symptoms will be more severe and could lead to serious or life-threatening illness. Examples of persons with weakened immune systems include those with HIV/AIDS; cancer and transplant patients who are taking certain immunosuppressive drugs; and those with inherited diseases that affect the immune system.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has six suggestions to help you stay safe:

- Don’t swim when you have diarrhea, and for two weeks after the disease has cleared.
- Don’t swallow the pool water.
- Take a shower before swimming and wash your hands after using the toilet or changing diapers.
- Take the kids on bathroom breaks and check diapers often.
- Change diapers in a bathroom and not at poolside.
- Wash your child thoroughly (especially the rear end) with soap and water before swimming.

For more information about cryptosporidium, please visit the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention’s Web site at: <http://www.cdc.gov/healthyswimming/>.

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*The mission of the Utah Department of Health is to protect the public’s health through preventing avoidable illness, injury, disability and premature death, assuring access to affordable, quality health care, and promoting healthy lifestyles.*