



**DALLAS COUNTY  
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES  
OFFICE OF PUBLIC INFORMATION**

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**DCHHS Calls for Stronger Preventive Measures to Halt Spread of Crypto Cases**

August 6, 2008 (Dallas) — Dallas County Health and Human Services (DCHHS) continues to receive increasing numbers of reports of Cryptosporidiosis (Crypto) infections. DCHHS is working with hospitals, clinicians, municipalities and private water facility operators to quickly confirm cases, and ensure proper sanitation and educational measures have been implemented at the facilities. DCHHS has received 103 lab-confirmed cases of crypto since June 28, 2008. DCHHS is issuing strong recommendations to protect the public's health.

**For the general public:**

- **Anyone who has had diarrhea should not use water parks or pools while experiencing symptoms, and for at least two weeks after the symptoms have stopped.**
- Do not let children sit on or drink from the water spouts in interactive spray water parks or pools.
- Shower before and after using water parks and pools.
- Wash your hands with soap and water after using the toilet or changing diapers.
- Do not take pets into pools and spray parks.
- Persons at high risk of developing severe illness, such as those with compromised immune systems, should avoid use of water parks or pools until further notice.

“It is important that the public follow these recommendations,” said Dr. Wendy Chung, DCHHS Epidemiologist. “Our surveillance has found that about one-third of our cases have continued to use shared water facilities during and after experiencing diarrhea. This pattern of use has contributed to the ongoing spread of the infection and potential contamination of an increasing number of water facilities.” Chung continues.

In addition to warnings to the general public, DCHHS is issuing the following recommendations to pool owners and operators:

- Post signs regarding the above recommendations for the general public at your facility.
- All water parks and pools, both public and private, should hyperchlorinate **immediately** and consider preventive routine hyperchlorination on a weekly basis thereafter.
- Home owners should strongly consider hyperchlorination if their pool has been used by anyone who has had diarrhea. As a preventive measure, homeowners may also consider hyperchlorination if their pools are routinely used by persons who also use other water parks, spray parks, or pools.

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*page 2 of 2 pages*

- If a fecal incident occurs, immediately close the pool or spray park, remove as much of the fecal material as possible, and repeat hyperchlorination protocols. Leave the net or bucket used to remove the fecal material in the water during hyperchlorination to disinfect the item prior to repeat use.
- Maintain chlorine levels at 5 ppm
- DCHHS strongly recommends installing appropriate filtration and disinfection systems, including the use of ultraviolet disinfection units;
- DCHHS also strongly recommends constructing fencing around the facility to keep wild life and pets from entering the water area.

“DCHHS is working with water facility operators across the county to ensure that proper sanitation procedures are being performed,” Zachary Thompson said. ““However, the public should be aware that currently, there are no regulations specifically for stand-alone interactive water features. To help halt the spread of crypto, DCHHS is working with the Texas Hotel & Lodging Association and the Greater Dallas Apartment Association to contact hotel, motel and apartment complexes with information about proper sanitation procedures and requesting the posting of public education signage. We are also now recommending that all pool owners and operators hyperchlorinate due to the increasing number of facilities being implicated in the investigation,” Thompson continued.

Crypto is a diarrheal illness caused by microscopic parasites called Cryptosporidium. Its symptoms include loss of appetite, nausea, vomiting and diarrhea (which can last 1-2 weeks). Anyone experiencing these symptoms should seek medical attention. An individual usually becomes infected with Crypto by ingesting contaminated food or water.

Pool and spray park operators are asked to report cases of diarrheal illness possibly linked to use of their recreational water facility to DCHHS. Anyone experiencing symptoms should seek medical attention and report the information to DCHHS at (214) 819-2004. Signage and additional information is available on our website at [www.dallascounty.org](http://www.dallascounty.org).

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