## News from the Wyoming Department of Health

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## **Cryptosporidium Increase Reported in Campbell County**

Wyoming Department of Health (WDH) officials have detected a significant increase in Campbell County cryptosporidium infections and recommend residents take safety measures when swimming to prevent further spread of the disease.

"As of August 25 we have 30 reported cases of cryptosporidium infection in Campbell County," said Kelly Weidenbach, surveillance epidemiologist with the WDH Infectious Disease Epidemiology Program. "This is higher rate than usual, especially since July 1." Many of the reported cases were in families where multiple people in one family were ill.

"Although summer is nearing an end, people are still out enjoying warm weather activities," Weidenbach said. "We want them to stay safe and healthy."

Cryptosporidium is a parasite that infects humans and animals. Cryptosporidium can make people sick when they swallow contaminated food or water. A person can also become ill from others who are infected and are not using good hygiene practices.

Over half of the identified cases this summer report going to Keyhole Reservoir. Cryptosporidium is naturally found in untreated bodies of water such as reservoirs, lakes, and rivers. Cases also commonly reported exposure to swimming pools. While chlorination helps disinfect pool water and prevents many waterborne illnesses, cryptosporidium is particularly resistant to chlorine disinfection because the organism has a hard coating or shell. Additionally, accidental fecal releases can introduce the parasite into pool water.

Common symptoms of cryptosporidium include frequent, watery diarrhea; stomach cramps; nausea and vomiting; fatigue; loss of appetite and fever. People who believe they may have an illness consistent with cryptosporidium should contact a healthcare provider. Some people may not show any signs of illness, but could still have the parasite and spread illness to others. Children have been known to show mild symptoms and pass the illness on to other family members. For most people, the illness lasts from 1 to 20 days.

WDH recommends the following preventive measures:

- Do not swallow any untreated surface water, like from rivers and lakes, or swimming pool water
- Wash uncooked food items before they are consumed.
- Practice good hand hygiene and frequent hand washing

- If you have diarrhea, do not use public recreational water, including swimming pools, lakes, and ponds, until two weeks after your symptoms go away.
- If you have diarrhea or vomiting not explained by another non-infectious cause, you should stay home if you are in food service work, direct care of hospitalized or institutionalized patients, or attending or working in child care.

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