Cryptosporidium

Middlesbrough
moving forward

Cryptosporidium is caused by consuming an organism that can be present in contaminated food and water.

The illness, which includes symptoms of diarrhoea, stomach pains, fever and vomiting, occurs between one and ten days after ingesting the organism and may last from one day to several weeks.

Watercourses such as rivers, lakes and untreated private water supplies may be contaminated and therefore if you drink or accidentally swallow untreated water there is a risk of infection.

The organism may also be spread between people living or working together, and can spread by direct contact on unwashed hands.

Treatment

Most people overcome the illness without treatment, however if treatment is required you should contact your family Doctor.

What About Going To School or Work

Until symptoms have gone you should remain off work or school. Usually as soon as you feel well and any diarrhoea has stopped you can go back.

In certain cases you may be advised to remain off work or school until 48 hours after symptoms have stopped. This is especially if your work involves contact with young children or the elderly who are more vulnerable to infection

Preventing Cryptosporidium

- Wash and dry hands thoroughly after using the toilet, after changing a baby's nappy and after touching animals.
- Try to avoid swallowing water when involved in water sports and avoid drinking untreated water.
- Be particularly careful when travelling abroad to countries where standards of hygiene and sanitation may be poor.
- If you have Cryptosporidium it is important that the toilet area is cleaned after use. This should include flush handles, door handles and taps. If using disinfectant ensure that the manufacturers' instructions are followed.

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