



News Release

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Swimming Restrictions Modified for Kids Who Don't Wear Diapers

All swimmers still encouraged to practice proper hygiene

(Salt Lake City, UT) – The Utah Department of Health (UDOH) announced today that local health department swimming restrictions for certain children under age five have been modified. The restriction from swimming continues for anyone who needs to wear diapers, regardless of age. The increased schedule of treating pools by hyperchlorination and maintaining higher levels of chlorine will also continue.

The restrictions were originally announced at UDOH by local health departments Aug. 28 to control a statewide outbreak of cryptosporidiosis, an infection caused by a parasite that causes long-lasting, often debilitating diarrhea. While cases are still being reported, health officials report that the rate of new cases appears to be slowing.

“Given the decline, it does look like the measures local health departments put into place are working,” said Dr. Robert Rolfs, UDOH state epidemiologist. “This modification is being made is to better focus local efforts on keeping fecal matter out of pools by keeping diapers out of the pools. This should ease the burden on many families wanting to send their potty-trained children to swim lessons while still prohibiting those likely to have accidents in the pool.” State officials will continue to monitor the numbers, and should an increase appear, stronger restrictions will once again be implemented by the local health departments.

The change in restrictions applies to 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, and Wasatch County and Weber/Morgan.

Gary Edwards, the Executive Director of the Salt Lake Valley Health Department says, “Now that one of the restrictions has been modified, it’s important for the public to do its part. This illness can be spread by person to person contact and if you have a family member who is sick, it’s important to

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practice good hygiene. It remains very important that anybody who has diarrhea not swim for two weeks after the diarrhea symptoms have ended.”

Person to person spread can occur when you put something into your mouth or swallow something that has come into contact with cryptosporidium. 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.

In a normal year, Utah generally sees about 30 cases of crypto across the state. As of Monday, Sept. 24, UDOH has confirmed 1,705 cases – the majority occurring just since June. The parasite is most commonly spread through swimming pools; however, public health officials have also noticed an increase in the numbers of cases spread from person-to-person.

People who are more likely to become seriously ill if exposed to crypto should still be extra careful and avoid public pools. Those at higher risk include:

- 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.

For more information about cryptosporidium, visit <http://www.cdc.gov/healthyswimming/> or call your local health department.

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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.