



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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For additional information contact:

Bill Anstey at (616) 632-7178 or Bill.Anstey@kentcountymi.gov

**Kent County Health, Parks Departments Cleaning
Millennium Park Splash Pad
Splash Pad scheduled to reopen on Sunday**

GRAND RAPIDS -- Kent County Parks officials are cleaning the Millennium Park Splash Pad system, after a few visitors reported a common stomach illness. The Kent County Health Department (KCHD) has noted an increase in the number cases of cryptosporidiosis during the month of August. Several of the cases reported to KCHD this week were linked to a visit to Millennium Park on or around August 8th. The Kent County Health Department notified the Parks Department of the possible link today. Although the incidents of exposure are thought to have occurred three weeks ago, the Parks Department is taking the precautionary measure of closing the Splash Pad until Sunday for Hyper-Chlorination to clean and disinfect the area. The beach area remains open, with reduced admission fees.

One of the most common waterborne illnesses, *cryptosporidium* is a microscopic parasite found in fecal matter of human and some animals. Many people refer to the parasite and the disease as "Crypto." It can survive outside of the body for some time, making transmission easier than some other parasites. Crypto is transmitted when children swallow water that has been contaminated or after swimming and not washing hands thoroughly before handling food. Most cases occur in children, in women who are pregnant, or in adults who have a weakened immune system. Symptoms include diarrhea, stomach cramping, fever, vomiting and dehydration, and can last one to two weeks.

"Typically, we see about 3 cases in Kent County during the month of August," said Cathy Raevsky, the Administrative Health Officer for the Kent County Health Department. "This month, nine cases, six children and three adults, have been reported."

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention offers the following tips for people planning to go to pools, splash pads, interactive fountains, ponds, lakes, or other recreational water facilities:

- Don't swim if you have diarrhea.
- Shower before and after swimming.
- Take children on frequent bathroom breaks and check their diapers often.
- Change diapers in the bathroom, not at the poolside.
- If you or a child has been diagnosed with crypto, don't swim for at least 2 weeks after diarrhea stops.

KCHD has been in the business of providing health services to Kent County since 1931. The Health Department is home to nearly 260 employees including public health nurses, sanitarians, health educators, technicians, public health administrators, and specialized staff at the Kent County Animal Shelter. The Health Department operates one main clinic and four satellite clinics located in Wyoming, Kentwood, Rockford, and Grand Rapids. To learn more about KCHD services, visit www.accesskent.com/health.

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- Wash hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, rubbing hands together vigorously and scrubbing all surfaces, before preparing or eating food, and after using the toilet.

Crypto is highly resistant to standard amounts of chlorine, and difficult to detect in lab tests. In ponds and lakes, there are no control measures that can be taken other than personal protection and good hygiene. More information can be found at: <http://www.cdc.gov/parasites/crypto/>

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700 FULLER AVE. NE, GRAND RAPIDS, MI 49503