
HEALTH DEPARTMENT
NEWS RELEASE



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Kent County Health Department Investigating Potential Cryptosporidiosis Outbreak

GRAND RAPIDS – The Kent County Health Department (KCHD) is investigating a likely outbreak of Cryptosporidiosis among approximately 30 people who are closely associated with the Rockford High School varsity football program. On Wednesday, August 24, 2016 health department staff was made aware that these individuals were suffering symptoms of a gastrointestinal illness.

Today, KCHD received laboratory results that confirm the diagnosis of cryptosporidiosis in a second person associated with the team. Laboratory tests confirmed the diagnosis of a previous case on Wednesday, August 24, 2016.

On Thursday, August 25, 2016, KCHD conducted an onsite assessment at Rockford High School as part of its investigation. In light of that assessment and the fact that the outbreak is not significantly affecting other groups on campus, KCHD does not believe at this time that the school or its water supply are the source of the infection. The Kent County Health Department continues to work closely with the Rockford School District to monitor, investigate and mitigate the situation. The investigation is focusing on exposures and activities that are unique to the varsity football team.

Cryptosporidiosis is a diarrheal disease that is caused by the microscopic parasite *Cryptosporidium*. Commonly referred to as Crypto, the parasite lives in the gut of humans and animals and is shed through feces. While the parasite can be spread in many ways, water is the most common method. This can happen when animal waste contaminates a water source and that water is eventually consumed as drinking water or is used as recreational water for swimming. *Cryptosporidium* is a leading cause of waterborne disease in the United States. More information on Crypto can be found [here](#).

Cryptosporidiosis generally begins 2 – 10 days after becoming infected with the parasite. The most common symptom is watery diarrhea but can include stomach cramps, dehydration, nausea, vomiting, fever and weight loss. KCHD recommends rigorous personal hygiene and sanitation in the home environment. Good handwashing is important and sick people should not be preparing food for others. KCHD also encourages sick individuals (vomiting and/or diarrhea) to contact their family physician and inform them that they are ill and associated with the Rockford football team. KCHD has notified local physicians of the situation and testing recommendations.

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KCHD has been in the business of providing health services to Kent County since 1931. The Health Department is home to nearly 265 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 three satellite clinics located in Kentwood, Rockford, and Grand Rapids. To learn more about KCHD services, visit www.accesskent.com/health.

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