
HEALTH DEPARTMENT
NEWS RELEASE



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Kent County Health Department Identifies Likely Exposure Site of Cryptosporidiosis Outbreak

GRAND RAPIDS – As part of the ongoing investigation into a recent outbreak of Cryptosporidiosis among Rockford varsity football players, the Kent County Health Department (KCHD) has concluded that those who were sickened were likely exposed during activities at a team campout / retreat that took place August 12 and 13. Infection with the *Cryptosporidium* parasite most likely occurred through contact with surface water or mud. These conclusions are based on data collected from players, coaches and family members through exhaustive research over the past week. KCHD is confident that the primary exposure did not take place on school property.

On Wednesday, August 24, 2016 health department staff was made aware that approximately 30 individuals were suffering symptoms of a gastrointestinal illness. All of them were closely associated with the Rockford High School varsity football program. To date, six of them have been diagnosed with Cryptosporidiosis that has been confirmed by laboratory testing. The symptoms of the others are consistent with cryptosporidiosis.

“The Kent County Health Department greatly appreciates the level of cooperation received from Rockford Schools during this process,” says Adam London, Administrative Health Officer at the health department. “Dr. Mike Shibler and his entire staff took a positive and proactive approach in evaluating, monitoring and limiting the outbreak. The district’s quick action and openness likely helped contain this outbreak.” KCHD continues to work closely with the Rockford School District.

As infected individuals begin to recover, it remains important to take steps to eliminate transmission to others. Proper handwashing is the best way to protect yourself and others from the spread of any disease. People who are ill should not go to school or work or be around other people until they have been free from symptoms for 48 hours.

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. *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.

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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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