



Department of Health

Incorporating: Health, Mental Health and Ageing

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Our Ref: DHD/13/7082

Your Ref:

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Dear Parent / Guardian of Children Attending Swimming Lessons or Swim Clubs

An outbreak of cryptosporidium infection (also referred to as 'crypto') is affecting Melbourne and many parts of regional Victoria. The Department of Health is requesting that parents and guardians of all children who attend swimming lessons or swim clubs in Victoria be provided with information on how to protect themselves and others when swimming. **This letter does not indicate a problem with the facility your child attends** - it is being provided across the State and contains advice that is important all year round.

Crypto is a parasitic infection that causes gastroenteritis, with the most common symptoms being diarrhoea, stomach cramps and nausea. Symptoms may last for weeks and have serious consequences for people who have weakened immune systems. During swimming, people can become infected by swallowing water which has become contaminated by human faeces, usually from tiny amounts that cannot be seen. Crypto can also be spread from person to person, especially in settings such as childcare facilities and in households where there are cases.

All swimming pool patrons are able to become infected if the pool is contaminated with crypto because crypto parasites are not killed by the normal levels of chlorine used in swimming pools. Without realising, people with crypto infection can contaminate pool water up to 14 days after their diarrhoea has stopped. Pool operators have taken steps including decontamination of water where appropriate as a protective measure, but this cannot break the cycle of crypto infection without the help of patrons.

To prevent the spread of disease, parents / guardians should ensure they and their children take the following actions to protect themselves and others:

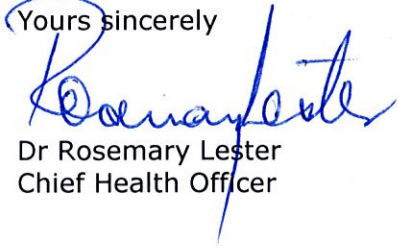
- **Do not swim if you have diarrhoea or if you have had diarrhoea in the past two weeks;**
- **Shower and wash thoroughly with soap before entering the pool;**
- **Wash your hands with soap after going to the toilet or changing a nappy;**
- **Avoid swallowing pool water.**

For more general information on avoiding Crypto and other infectious diseases while swimming, please go to: <http://health.vic.gov.au/water/recreational/cryptosporidium.htm>

If you have any concerns about your health or the health of your child, please consider seeking medical advice. A simple stool (poo) test is available to diagnose crypto infection if your doctor considers that crypto may be a cause of symptoms.

Thank you for your cooperation.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Rosemary Lester". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "R".

Dr Rosemary Lester
Chief Health Officer