



STATE OF MICHIGAN

GRETCHEN WHITMER
GOVERNOR

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES
LANSING

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:
Dec. 8, 2022

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Michigan residents urged to take precautions around livestock following recent cases of parasitic illness

LANSING, Mich. – The Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS) is reminding Michiganders of steps they can take to keep themselves safe and healthy when touching or working around livestock.

MDHHS and local health departments have been investigating an outbreak of cryptosporidiosis in residents in Livingston, Ingham and Oakland counties. The illnesses are believed to have been caused by a parasite called *Cryptosporidium* and occurred after people came into contact with a group of sick calves. To date, a total of 12 people between the ages of 19 and 56 (one confirmed, four probable and seven suspect cases) became sick with diarrhea and other symptoms between Nov. 15-21.

Cryptosporidium is a parasite found in the stool of infected people or animals. Infected calves and other livestock can spread it even if they don't seem sick. If a person's hands, drinking water, food or recreational water are contaminated with small amounts of infected stool from either livestock or people, they could swallow the parasite and become sick. This parasite is not spread through properly cooked meat from animals or pasteurized milk or dairy products.

Symptoms in people include diarrhea, stomach pain and cramping, nausea, vomiting, dehydration, fever and weight loss, and can last for several weeks. Treatment is available, so it is important to seek medical care if you have symptoms, especially if the symptoms do not resolve quickly.

People can take the following steps to stay healthy when handling calves and other livestock:

- Wash hands thoroughly with soap and running water after touching calves and other livestock. Alcohol-based hand sanitizers do not work against *Cryptosporidium*.
- Clean and disinfect items and surfaces that could have manure on them.
- Avoid eating food in areas with manure from calves or other livestock.
- Do not eat or drink raw milk or dairy products.
- Have sick livestock evaluated by a veterinarian.

If you become sick:

- Tell your health care provider about any contact with calves and other livestock.
- Avoid cooking food for others for two weeks after symptoms stop.
- Do not go swimming until two weeks after symptoms stop.

Health officials would also like to remind health care providers to ask about animal exposures when evaluating and treating patients for diarrheal illnesses.

Cryptosporidiosis cases should be reported to the local health department.

For more information on *Cryptosporidium*, visit the [Center for Disease Control and Prevention's Cryptosporidium page](#).

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