

# FACT SHEET

## Cryptosporidium

### **What is Cryptosporidium?**

Cryptosporidium is a microscopic parasite that can be found in source water. It can be introduced to a water supply through the contaminated waste of mammals living near water bodies.

### **Is Cryptosporidium in my drinking water?**

Des Moines Water Works has been testing for Cryptosporidium since 1993. The treated drinking water has been tested over 100 times for Cryptosporidium, and the organism has never been detected.

### **How does Des Moines Water Works test for Cryptosporidium?**

In accordance with prescribed United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) methods, a large amount of water is collected and concentrated using a lengthy process. The sample concentrate is applied to a glass slide for viewing under a microscope.

### **How is Cryptosporidium removed from the water source?**

Des Moines Water Works employs a multi-staged system of water purification. Sedimentation, lime softening, sand filtration, and chlorination are all used to progressively remove Cryptosporidium and other microorganisms from the water.

### **What are the health effects associated with Cryptosporidium?**

Ingesting Cryptosporidium-laden raw water can cause intestinal illness. Symptoms include diarrhea, abdominal cramps, headaches, nausea, vomiting, and low-grade fever. For more information, please contact your health care provider.

### **What is being done to reduce Cryptosporidium contamination in our water source?**

Des Moines Water Works actively participates in watershed projects dedicated to reducing the amount of contaminated run-off reaching our water sources.