



Controlling Crypto

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If diarrhea becomes a problem in your kennel, this pathogen may be the culprit. And it can be deadly or, at best, difficult to treat. It frequently appears in puppies along with other diseases such as Parvo and Distemper, making treatment a complicated matter. Read this week's article to find out what you can do about it.



Cryptosporidium Canis can be a very elusive virus. Adult animals can carry it with no symptoms. It can re-infect an animal once it has been dropped in feces. And it is not routinely detected in normal fecal lab tests.

It can also be very hard to treat. Often, it accompanies other diseases: Parvo, Distemper, Giardia, Coccidia or internal worms. Concocting the right drug treatment can be very complicated. Current medications for Crypto include: Tylosin, Azithromycin and, less commonly, Paromycin. A newer drug, Alinia is also having results but is not yet recommended for young puppies.

It is very difficult to remove Crypto from the kennel. The virus is very resistant to bleach and many other chemicals. Rick Kessler DVM recommends formulas containing Quaternary Ammonium compounds and advises their use in any kennel with a positive test for Crypto.

In addition, Crypto can live on surfaces for a few hours so it's possible that it can spread around even to non-animal areas such as a counter or a door-handle between the time an animal was handled to the time hands were washed.



A local animal shelter in Minnesota had an outbreak in 2012 and lived to tell about it. Dogs, employees, volunteers and visitors all got sick before they got things under control. They found out the hard way that hand sanitizers and bleach have no effect on Crypto.

Can you also get ill from it? Definitely. 20 years ago, [Milwaukee experienced a Cryptosporidium outbreak](#) so large it is touted as the largest waterborne disease outbreak in documented United States history. More than 400,000 people were sickened by the parasite over a two week period in the spring of 1993.

The source of the outbreak was contaminated water from a water treatment plant. Over 4000 people were hospitalized and 69 died from the Crypto outbreak. The city has had a flashback of that experience this fall, despite a tremendous investment in new water treatment systems.

What are the symptoms in humans? The main symptom is self-limiting diarrhea in people with intact immune systems. In immune-compromised individuals, such as AIDS patients, the symptoms are particularly severe and often fatal.

How do you know if it is in your kennel? **DNA testing.** A comprehensive DNA panel can now test your animals for various gastro-intestinal diseases and is much more reliable than fecal examination.

Genetic testing has become more common for pets in recent years. There are already at least 80 DNA tests available to detect disease-related genes in dogs, from narcolepsy in Labrador retrievers to early-onset, hereditary cataracts in Boston terriers. You can use the information to identify dogs that carry the faulty genes and make sure they do not pass them on to future generations by eliminating them from your breeding program.

Related Links

[VIDEO: Monsters Inside Me – Cryptosporium Outbreak](#)

[The Great Crypto Outbreak in Milwaukee](#)
[Story of animal shelter outbreak](#)
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