

**ABC 7 News: Chlorine-resistant Pool Germ Sickening More and More People posted 12:35 pm
Thu July 31, 2008 -**

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention is warning swimmers about a growing problem called crypto -- a waterborne germ impervious to chlorine.

Jenni Broomhead knows the dangers all too well. She threw a pool party at a public pool in Utah last August. Forty of the 47 swimmers who got in the water became ill with crypto.

"I hadn't heard of it," recalled Broomhead. "I didn't even know the name of it."

Crypto, short for Cryptosporidium, is found in fecal matter. According to the CDC (web|news), the "germ is protected by an outer shell that allows it to survive for long periods of time and makes it resistant to chlorine disinfection found in pools."

The disease causes cramping, diarrhea, vomiting and fever; the symptoms can last for weeks. Broomhead and other parents suddenly found themselves caring for dozens of sick children, many requiring hospitalization.

"It was an awful, awful thing. The kids were in so much pain," recalled Broomhead. "I had 18 and 19 year olds in my family curled up, tearing up for 8, 9, 10 hours in one day."

Researchers believe crypto only developed in the past couple of decades.

"So now we have a bug in the pools that's resistant to the major barrier that kills most of the germs that gets transmitted when your swimming," said Michael Beach, who heads the CDC's team on parasitic diseases.

The CDC reports crypto cases have doubled in recent years. This path month, the city of Phoenix shut down all of its public pools after a hundred people fell ill. In 2007, more than 2,000 people in Utah were stricken by the parasite in a statewide outbreak.

There are ways to combat the problem.

The Seven Peaks water park in Provo, Utah, spent \$250,000 on a system which uses ultraviolet light to kill the parasite.

"In order to gain back the respect of the public, and in order to protect the public, we wanted to put in these UV treatment systems that help in case of contamination," said water park spokesperson Spencer Pettit.

"They are not the perfect answer to this though," added Beach. "We still have to get the public to understand their role in preventing the initial contamination of the water."

Utah officials now require diaper-aged kids to wear swim diapers or waterproof pants in the pool, even though they're not fail-safe. Anybody who has suffered diarrhea is asked not to swim for two weeks afterward.
