



NEWS RELEASE

ALABAMA DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH

RSA Tower 201 Monroe Street, Suite 914 Montgomery, AL 36104

Phone 334-206-5300 Fax 334-206-5534

www.adph.org

ADPH investigates illness associated with a recreational water facility

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CONTACT:

Charles Woernle, M.D.
(334) 206-5325

The Alabama Department of Public Health is investigating a cluster of ill persons associated with the Alabama Adventure Water Park in Bessemer. These individuals have tested positive for a parasite that causes an illness called cryptosporidiosis.

Symptoms of cryptosporidiosis include frequent, watery diarrhea that generally occurs within 1-12 days after infection. Some people may also have abdominal cramping, headache, nausea, vomiting and low-grade fever. Other persons may have no symptoms. People who are ill should consult with their health care provider. Cryptosporidiosis in otherwise healthy persons is usually a self-limited illness.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, children, pregnant women and people with weakened immune systems can suffer from more severe illness if infected with cryptosporidium. These include people living with AIDS, individuals who have received an organ transplant, or people receiving certain types of chemotherapy. Individuals with weakened immune systems should be aware that recreational water might be contaminated with human or animal feces containing germs that can cause severe disease in persons with weakened immune systems.

Illnesses in recreational waters are caused by germs spread by swallowing, breathing in mists or aerosols or having contact with contaminated water in swimming pools, water parks, hot tubs, interactive fountains, water play areas, lakes, rivers or oceans. The CDC recommends following the healthy swimming guidelines for people using recreational water facilities:

- * Do not swim when you are ill with diarrhea.
- * If you have cryptosporidiosis, do not swim until two weeks after your diarrhea ends.
- * Do not swallow the water when you swim or wade in a pool/lake/river water. Avoid getting water in your mouth.
- * Practice good hygiene (such as showering before swimming).
- * Please take children on bathroom breaks or check diapers often. Waiting to hear "I need to go," may mean that it is too late.
- * Please change diapers in a bathroom or a diaper-changing area and not at poolside.
- * Please wash children thoroughly (especially in the diaper region) with soap and water before swimming.

Visit CDC's Healthy Swimming Web site at www.cdc.gov/healthywater/swimming to learn how to protect yourself and others by following tips for healthy swimming.

Public Health staff is working with the facility to eliminate any contamination. Alabama Adventure is fully cooperating, and it will remain closed until all pools are decontaminated. Following CDC guidelines and the best practices model for the elimination of cryptosporidium, the recreational water facility is hyperchlorinating the water to the recommended levels and length of time prescribed by the CDC guidelines.

-30-

8/20/10