



# Water And Immune Deficiency Syndrome

## The Fact Sheet – Water and Health

Contaminated water could be harmful to anyone, even more so for those with weakened immune systems, which is what immune deficiency syndrome is. In fact, some organisms that could show up in water may be harmless to most, but deadly to others. A weaker immune system means a higher likelihood of contracting disease from waterborne contaminants.

### WATER CONTAMINANTS

Cryptosporidiosis, a diarrhoea disease known better as "crypto", is one ailment caused by a microscopic parasite that can have a greater effect on a weakened immune system. In fact, over the past 20 years, it has become one of the more common waterborne illnesses. *Cryptosporidium parvum* lives in intestines of humans and animals and is passed in their stool. This disease is communicable and can be passed by water, sex, sharing food and even touching farm animals. The parasite is protected by an outer shell, which allows it to survive outside the body for long periods of time and-- here's the kicker-- makes it very resistant to chlorine disinfections.

The parasite is found in every region of the United States and throughout the world in drinking and recreational water. The illness can last a few days to a week in a normal person, but for someone with AIDS, it can be fatal. Ironically, with something you catch from water, water is a huge cure for this. With diarrhoea, people become very dehydrated. Drinking clean, pure water is a way to get back to health. However, once inflicted, the disease can reoccur.

The best prevention is to practice safe water practices. Most important, this means clean drinking water. Another disease to be aware of is toxoplasmosis- a disease from a single-celled parasite *Toxoplasma gondii*. It is noted that there are over 60-million people who are infected with this disease-causing parasite, however most immune systems fight off an illness before symptoms arise, the parasite lying dormant.

But for those with weaker immune systems, it's not that easy. According to the Center for Disease Control, those with weak immune systems should ask their doctors about getting a blood test for toxoplasma. If results are positive, doctors can inform the patient if and when medicine should be taken to prevent the infection from reactivating. A negative test means the person was never infected. But precautions need to be taken to avoid infection. Warning signs of toxoplasmosis include flu-like symptoms and achy muscles. In a healthy person, the "bug" will work its way out.

These are only two examples of major diseases that can affect someone with a weak immune system.

### WATER FILTRATION

Since the immune system can't work as efficiently to protect you from water contaminants, it is advisable to get a water filtration system to do so.