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MEDIA RELEASE



4 April 2019

For immediate release

Precaution urged against stomach parasite

The Shire of Broome is urging the community to take precautions following notification from the WA Department of Health of an increase in cases of gastroenteritis caused by a micro-organism.

Cryptosporidiosis is characterised by watery diarrhoea and stomach cramps and less commonly nausea, vomiting, slight fever or weight loss.

Cryptosporidium cases are reported most years, however nine cases had been reported in Broome in the past three weeks.

Cryptosporidium is easily spread through person-to-person contact particularly in families and among small children, handling animals and their excrement, eating uncooked foods, and water in swimming pools.

The best way to prevent infection is to wash hands thoroughly for 10 seconds with soap and running water after using the toilet, changing nappies, handling animals or before preparing food or drinks; avoid swallowing pool or spa water; and boil untreated water before drinking it when camping.

Shire of Broome Coordinator Environmental Health, Andrew Waters, said the WA Department of Health, WA Country Health Service and the Shire were working together to provide information and advice about preventing the spread of Cryptosporidiosis to childcare centres, schools, commercial pool operators and remote communities.

“Both the BRAC swimming pool and Town Beach water playground maintain adequate disinfection and filtration systems to kill micro-organisms, but as an added precaution both the BRAC pool and Town Beach water playground were closed and super chlorinated this week,” he said.

“It’s also recommended that private pool owners who suspect an infected person has been swimming should carry out a super chlorination, with information available from the Shire website.

“To keep swimming pools free from contamination, it’s vital that people do not swim in a pool or enter a spa until at least two weeks after they have completely recovered from a diarrhoeal illness.”

Anyone with concerns about Cryptosporidiosis should visit their doctor. More information is available at www.broome.wa.gov.au or by calling (08) 9191 3456.

ENDS