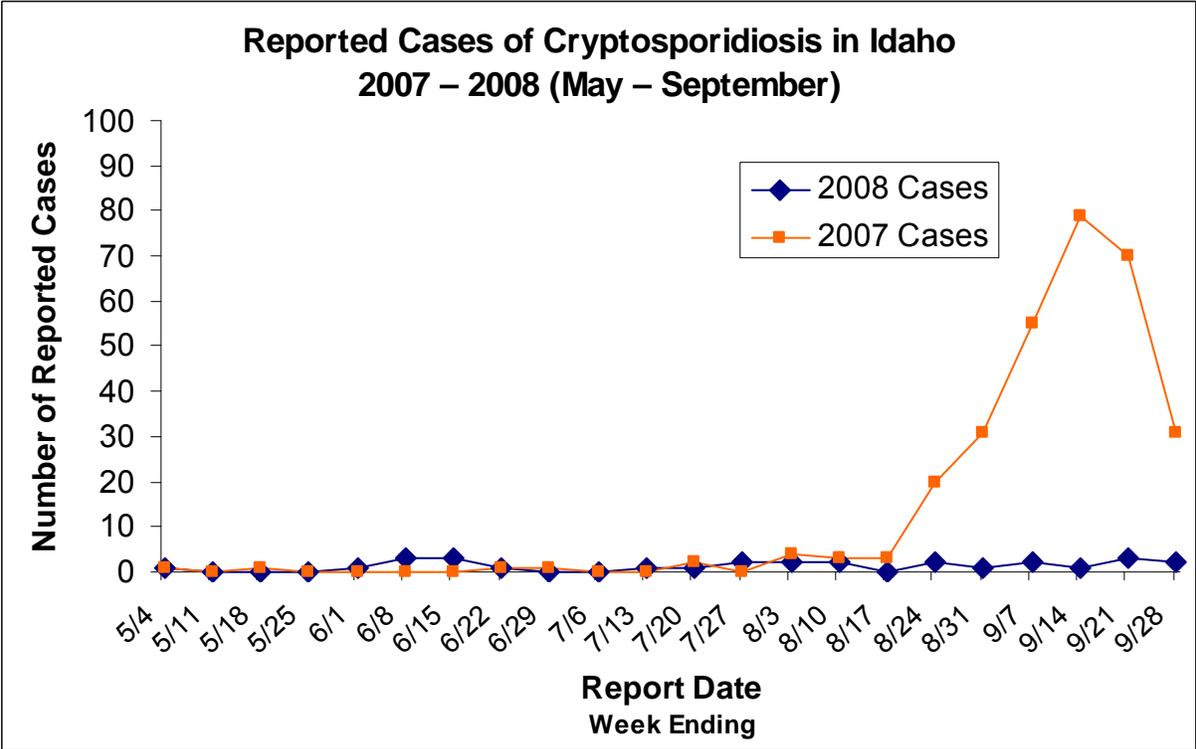


*Cryptosporidium* (Krip-tō-spór-`id-ē-əm)

Cryptosporidiosis is a diarrheal disease caused by a microscopic parasite, *Cryptosporidium* or "Crypto" for short. Many species of *Cryptosporidium* exist that infect humans and a wide range of animals. The parasite is protected by an outer shell that allows it to survive outside the body for long periods of time and makes it very resistant to chlorine disinfection. While this parasite can be transmitted in several different ways, water is a common method of transmission and *Cryptosporidium* is one of the most frequent causes of waterborne disease (drinking water and recreational water) among humans in the United States.

*Cryptosporidium* can be spread by swallowing water that can be contaminated with sewage or feces from humans or animals, by accidentally swallowing something that has come in contact with the stool of a person or animal infected with *Cryptosporidium*, or by swallowing *Cryptosporidium* picked up from surfaces contaminated with stool from an infected person. (Adapted from <http://cdc.gov/crypto>)

Idaho experienced a large increase in the number of reported cases of cryptosporidiosis in the summer of 2007 compared to reported cases in previous years. The increase was related to outbreaks associated with recreational water venues and was likely caused in part by increased awareness and increased testing for *Cryptosporidium* in patients experiencing diarrhea. The number of reported cases of cryptosporidiosis in Idaho in May through September, for 2007 and 2008 are displayed below.



Data are provisional and current as of September 30, 2008.