

## Westport issued with boil water notice following outbreak

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One of the country's top tourist town has been hit with a water crisis with people in Westport in Co Mayo being issued with a boil water notice following a Cryptosporidium outbreak.

Irish Water confirmed in a statement that the notice was issued on Wednesday as a precautionary measure to 6,400 customers in Westport due to eight case of Cryptosporidiosis being reported to the HSE in recent weeks.

“Although water testing has not detected the presence of Cryptosporidium in the supply serving this area, 7 of the 8 cases identified have been in the area serviced by Westport Public Water Scheme,” Irish Water said.

The area affected are: Westport Water Supply, Ballinlough Group Water Scheme, Cloghans GWS, Brackloon/Bohea GWS, Cuslough GWS, Farnaught GWS and Rosmoney West GWS. Full details of the areas affected are available on [www.water.ie](http://www.water.ie)

The statement from Irish Water said: “Drinking water is one possible source for this potentially serious infectious disease and in the interest of public health, and in the absence of the definite source of the illness being identified, this boil water notice is being issued by Irish Water on advice from the HSE.

“Persons with an impaired immune system, young children and older people are most susceptible to Cryptosporidium”.

Drinking water produced at Westport Water Treatment works is routinely sampled for Cryptosporidium and to date nothing has been detected, the statement said. The most recent samples were returned last Friday and further sampling was carried out earlier this week.

Results of the analysis of these samples are expected on Friday.

“Irish Water will continue to liaise with the Health Service Executive with a view to lifting the Boil Water Notice as soon as

practicable,” the statement added.

Irish Water and Mayo County Council are in the process of providing an alternative supply from Lough Mask to parts of Westport in an attempt to minimise the number of customers affected by this notice.

Cryptosporidium is a parasite found in food and water which has been contaminated by faeces from humans or animals. It is very resistant to normal levels of chlorine treatment.

People usually get cryptosporidium poisoning from swallowing contaminated water, eating contaminated food or coming into contact with contaminated faeces.

Last year a leading Irish ecologist warned that the contamination of Irish water supplies with cryptosporidium would continue to be a problem unless the management of ‘source to tap’ process was drastically improved.

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