Cryptosporidiosis

Giardia isn't the only parasite lurking in the water — there's also the microscopic parasite Cryptosporidium, which causes cryptosporidiosis (though both the disease and the parasite are referred to as "Crypto").

Unlike Giardia, the tiny protozoan parasite that causes Crypto is protected by an outer shell that allows it to survive for long periods of time without a host, and makes it resistant to certain disinfectants, according to the CDC.

People can become infected when they accidentally swallow water while they're swimming, Barron said. And if Crypto gets into a source of drinking water, entire towns may experience an outbreak, she said.

Barron noted that while the gastrointestinal symptoms are unpleasant — "they're not something you're going to ignore," she said — most people will recover on their own without treatment.

But now, let's turn to another parasite in the water that might as well come from a science fiction film. [Tiny & Nasty: Images of Things That Make Us Sick]
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