



Giardiasis

What is Giardiasis?

Giardiasis, or Giardia, is a disease caused by a parasite. The parasite lives in a person's intestines and causes diarrhea. The parasite is passed out of the body in stool (poop).

How do you get Giardiasis?

Giardiasis is spread when a person swallows the Giardiasis parasite. This can happen after:

- Touching things that have stool on them such as bathroom handles, baby changing tables, diaper pails or toys
- Drinking water or using ice from unclean water
- Swallowing unclean water in a lake, river, pond or stream
- Eating uncooked food that contains Giardiasis

Who can get Giardiasis?

Anyone can get Giardiasis. Giardiasis is more commonly seen in:

- Campers and hikers who drink unclean water
- Children in childcare settings especially those with diaper-age children
- International travelers



What are the symptoms?

- Diarrhea
- Gas
- Greasy stool that can float
- Stomach cramps
- Upset stomach or nausea
- Dehydration
- Lack of appetite
- Weight loss

Symptoms can begin 1 to 3 weeks after becoming infected. Symptoms can last from 2 to 6 weeks. Some people with Giardiasis do not have any symptoms.



What can I do to prevent Giardiasis?

- Wash your hands
- Practice good hygiene
- Avoid food and water that may be unclean
- Prevent contact with stool during sex
- Keep bathrooms and baby changing tables clean and sanitized

How is Giardiasis diagnosed?

If you have symptoms of Giardiasis, your doctor will ask you to submit a stool sample for testing. More than one sample may be needed.

How are Giardiasis treated?

Prescription medication is used to treat Giardiasis. You should drink lots of water and fluids while sick to prevent dehydration.

For more information

Contact the Huron County General Health District at (419) 668-1652. Information is also available from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention at www.cdc.gov/parasites/giardia.

