



## 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](http://www.cdc.gov/parasites/giardia).

