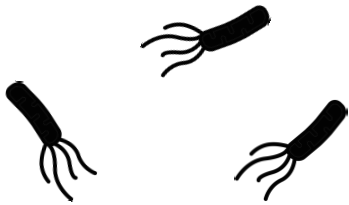


Giardiasis (Giardia)

Fact Sheet



Giardiasis is an illness caused by a parasite called *Giardia*. It is the most common intestinal parasite that affects people.



Giardia is found on surfaces or in soil, food, or water contaminated with feces from infected persons or animals.

Common Signs and Symptoms



Diarrhea



Upset Stomach or Nausea



Stomach Cramps

Symptoms include diarrhea, gas, greasy stools that may float, stomach cramps, and upset stomach or nausea. These symptoms may lead to weight loss and dehydration. Symptoms usually start one to three weeks after infection and last two to six weeks. Some people do not have symptoms.



Persons who are more likely to become infected include:

- Children in daycare
 - Childcare workers
 - Backpackers, hikers, and campers who drink unfiltered, untreated water
 - Persons who drink from shallow wells
 - Persons with history of travel to areas where the disease is common
 - Persons exposed to human feces through sexual contact
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Talk to your healthcare provider if you think you have giardiasis. Your healthcare provider may ask for a stool sample to send to a laboratory. You may be asked to submit several stool samples collected over several days.

Spread of Giardiasis

People can get sick with giardiasis through:



Swallowing something that has come into contact with feces of an infected person or animal



Swallowing *Giardia* picked up from surfaces contaminated with feces of an infected person



Swallowing water where *Giardia* may live while swimming or playing

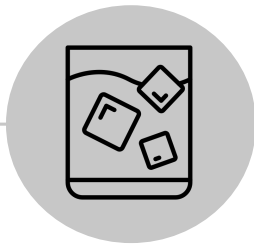


Traveling to countries where giardiasis is common

Prevent Giardiasis



Do not drink untreated water from ponds, lakes, or streams



Do not drink poorly treated water or use ice when traveling in countries where the water supply may be unsafe



If the safety of drinking water is in doubt, drink bottled water or boil tap water for 1 minute



Do not swallow water while swimming



Always Wash Your Hands With Soap And Water:

- Before eating and before and after preparing food
- After using the toilet or changing diapers
- After touching animals

For More Information, Visit:



1. www.maine.gov/dhhs/giardia
2. www.cdc.gov/giardia

You can also call Maine CDC at 1-800-821-5821.