



Infectious Disease Epidemiology Report

Cryptosporidiosis and Giardiasis Surveillance Report – Maine, 2015



Introduction

Cryptosporidiosis and giardiasis are diarrheal diseases caused by parasites. *Cryptosporidium sp.* (*C. hominis* or *C. parvum*) causes cryptosporidiosis (also referred to as ‘crypto’). Giardiasis is caused by *Giardia intestinalis*, *G. lamblia*, or *G. duodenalis*.

These parasites live in the intestines of infected humans or animals. Both parasites are found in soil, food, water, or surfaces that are contaminated with infected animal or human feces. Infection results from consuming contaminated food or water, person-to-person contact, or animal-to-person contact.

Healthy individuals are known to get sick from ingesting as few as 10 organisms. Infected individuals can shed parasites in feces for weeks after symptoms resolve.

Outbreaks of cryptosporidiosis in the United States are most often due to contaminated recreational water sources such as pools and waterparks. Chlorine does not effectively kill *Cryptosporidium*.

Individuals at greatest risk of infection with *Giardia* include persons swallowing contaminated drinking water (such as backpackers or campers), travelers to endemic countries, and persons sharing close contact with infected individuals (including childcare settings) and/or infected animals.

Methods

Cryptosporidiosis and giardiasis are reportable diseases in Maine. Maine Center for Disease Control and Prevention (Maine CDC) investigates cases of cryptosporidiosis to learn more about the risk factors associated with transmission. The surveillance case definition for a confirmed case of cryptosporidiosis changed during the past years (2011 and 2012), reflecting changes in diagnostic practices.

Reports of giardiasis were not investigated in Maine until June 2014; prior to this, case counts were likely overestimated since only laboratory information was collected. 2015 was the first year that all cases of giardia were investigated. This should be kept in mind when interpreting the overall Maine rate for giardiasis in 2014 and 2015.

Maine’s Health and Environmental Testing Laboratory (HETL) performs a validated *Cryptosporidium* PCR test currently available to clinicians at no charge. *Cryptosporidium* specimens tested at HETL are sent to Federal CDC for speciation and genotyping to learn more about outbreaks and sporadic cases of disease.

Results

In 2015, 34 cryptosporidiosis cases and 116 giardiasis cases were reported to Maine CDC (Figure 1, Table 1).

Figure 1. Rates of cryptosporidiosis and giardiasis, Maine and US, 2011 - 2015.

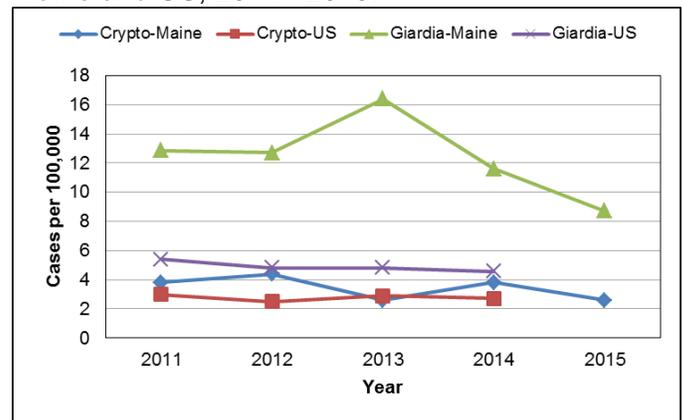


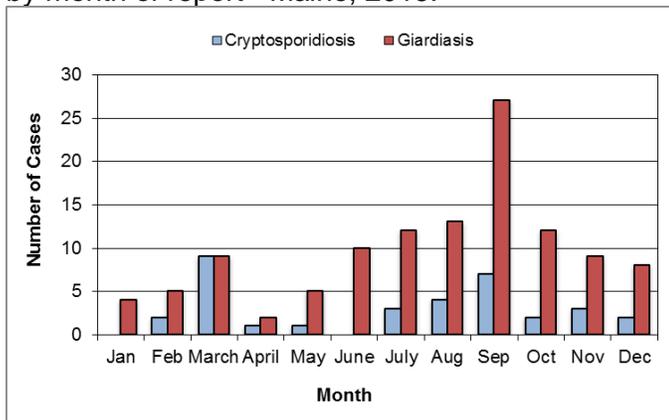
Table 1. Descriptive epidemiology of cryptosporidiosis and giardiasis - Maine, 2015.

	Cryptosporidiosis	Giardiasis
Case count	34	116
Five year median	51	171
Maine rate, 2015	2.6	8.7
US rate, 2014	2.7	4.6

Cryptosporidiosis and giardiasis reports increased in late summer and fall, indicating that many exposures occur throughout the summer and early fall (Figure 2).

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Figure 2. Cases of cryptosporidiosis and giardiasis by month of report - Maine, 2015.



Piscataquis County experienced rates of cryptosporidiosis more than thirteen times the national rate. In total, six counties (Hancock, Kennebec, Lincoln, Piscataquis, Waldo, and Washington) experienced rates of cryptosporidiosis greater than the national rate. Knox County experienced rates of giardiasis more than four times the national rate (Table 2).

Table 2. Incidence of cryptosporidiosis and giardiasis by county – Maine, 2015.

County	Cryptosporidiosis		Giardiasis	
	Count	Rate*	Count	Rate*
Androscoggin	0	0.0	8	7.5
Aroostook	0	0.0	3	4.4
Cumberland	3	1.0	25	8.6
Franklin	0	0.0	3	10.0
Hancock	5	9.1	7	12.8
Kennebec	8	6.7	5	4.2
Knox	1	2.5	8	20.1
Lincoln	1	2.9	4	11.8
Oxford	0	0.0	6	10.5
Penobscot	4	2.6	15	9.8
Piscataquis	6	35.4	3	17.7
Sagadahoc	0	0.0	4	11.4
Somerset	0	0.0	9	17.6
Waldo	2	5.1	3	7.7
Washington	1	3.2	2	6.3
York	3	1.5	11	5.5
Total	34	2.6	116	8.7

*Rate per 100,000 population

Discussion and Recommendations

Reports of giardiasis and cryptosporidiosis decreased in 2015 compared to previous years. The decrease in giardia is likely due to the change in investigating all cases of the disease. Since June 2014, all clinically incompatible reports are no

longer counted. Due to the high volume of giardiasis, patient interviews are not routinely completed; therefore, causes for the high rate of giardiasis in Maine are unclear.

The best ways to prevent cryptosporidiosis and giardiasis are to practice good personal hygiene, avoid swimming when ill with diarrhea, and disinfect water that may contain the parasites. The following steps can be taken to prevent infection:

- Wash hands with soap and water:
 - After using the toilet
 - After changing diapers, or assisting an individual using the toilet
 - Before and after preparing or eating food
 - After handling animals and animal waste
 - After gardening, even if wearing gloves
- Do not swim if you have diarrhea. Children in diapers should not be in the water if they have diarrhea. If diagnosed with cryptosporidiosis, wait two weeks after diarrhea ends to swim.
- Do not swallow water when swimming or boating.
- Do not drink untreated water from lakes, streams, ponds, or springs.
- Avoid unpasteurized juices and raw milk products.
- Rinse all fresh fruits and vegetables under clean running water.
- When traveling to countries where water may not be safe and sanitation is poor, do not use ice or tap water and avoid eating uncooked foods.
- Children with diarrhea should be excluded from child-care settings until diarrhea has stopped
- Food handlers should refrain from work until the diarrhea has resolved.

If the safety of drinking water is questionable: use bottled water, disinfect water by heating to a rolling boil for one minute, or use an appropriate filter (National Safety Foundation (NSF) Standard 53 or 58). Filtered water will need additional treatment to kill/inactivate bacteria or viruses.

All cases of cryptosporidiosis and giardiasis in Maine must be reported at 1-800-821-5821 or faxing reports to 1-800-293-7534. For more info:

- Maine CDC website: www.maine.gov/idepi
- Federal CDC websites:
 - www.cdc.gov/crypto/
 - www.cdc.gov/giardia
 - www.cdc.gov/healthyswimming