

Giardiasis (Giardia)



What is Giardia?



- Giardiasis is an illness caused by a microscopic parasite called Giardia.
- Giardiasis is a common infection with higher transmission in the summer than in the winter.
- Giardia commonly spreads when food, water, or soil is contaminated with feces (poop) and then enters the mouth of another person.

Who can get Giardia?



Giardia are too small to be seen and it only takes a small amount to make you sick. Anyone can become sick from it.

People can get Giardia from:

- Eating food contaminated with Giardia
- Drinking contaminated or untreated water
- Close contact with someone who has Giardiasis or their feces (poop)
- Touching surfaces contaminated with Giardia
- Exposure through sexual contact with someone who has recently recovered from Giardiasis

Symptoms of Giardia:

Symptoms usually start about 1-2 weeks after exposure, and if left untreated, may last from 2-6 weeks. Symptoms usually begin with having 2-3 loose stools (poop) per day with progressing fatigue.

Symptoms may include:

- Diarrhea
- Stomach cramps or pain
- Gas
- Nausea / Vomiting
- Fatigue
- Fever



What to do if you have symptoms:



Contact your health provider if you have concerns or questions about your health, especially if you have bloody diarrhea or severe stomach cramping. They may ask you to submit a stool (poop) sample to diagnose Giardiasis.

Tell your healthcare provider if you have other medical conditions or a weakened immune system (such as HIV infection or from chemotherapy treatment) because you may be more likely to become severely ill.

How to decrease your chance of getting Giardia:

There is no vaccine for Giardia, the best way to decrease your chance of infection is to practice good hygiene.

-Wash your hands often, especially:

- after using the bathroom
- before, during, and after preparing food
- after touching feces (poop)
- after field work, landscaping, or gardening



-Make sure to cook all foods all the way.

-Wash all fruits and vegetables before eating them.

-Disinfect possibly contaminated surfaces or objects.

-Avoid consuming potentially contaminated water, especially when at the pool, lake, or river.

Treatment:



People with a Giardiasis infection should drink plenty of fluids to prevent dehydration. Dehydration can cause serious complications and even hospitalization.

Most people can recover from a Giardiasis infection without treatment.

There are treatment options for Giardiasis. You should discuss these options with your doctor and follow their direction.