



Is there treatment for Giardia?

Several prescription drugs are available to treat *Giardia*. Consult a health care provider for more information regarding prescription drugs. Although *Giardia* can affect anyone, dehydration can occur in young children and pregnant women more often from diarrhea. Drink plenty of fluids if diagnosed with *Giardia*.

How can Giardia be prevented?

Practice good hygiene! Always wash hands with soap and water after using the toilet and before handling foods.

Avoid water that might be contaminated!

Avoid swallowing recreational water. Avoid drinking water that has not been treated. Do not drink untreated water from lakes, rivers, springs, ponds and streams. If water is used that is untreated, treat it yourself. Heat water to a boil for at least 1 minute.

Avoid food that might be contaminated!

Wash and/or peel all raw vegetables and fruits before eating. Avoid eating uncooked foods in other countries with limited sanitation systems.

Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and Oklahoma State Department of Health (OSDH)

Local Resources

For information on Giardia visit our website at:

<http://www.tulsa-health.org/community-health/epidemiology/>

or write:

Tulsa Health Department
Planning & Epidemiology
5051 S. 129th E. Ave.
Tulsa, OK 74134

Other Contact Information:

Phone: 918/595-4505

Fax: 918/595-4588

E-mail: epidemiology@tulsa-health.org

For more information on Giardia, visit::

- Oklahoma State Department of Health
(405) 271-4060
www.health.state.ok.us/program/cdd/infec.html
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
(888) 443-7232
www.cdc.gov



**TULSA HEALTH
DEPARTMENT**

Prepared by Planning & Epidemiology



Giardiasis

Giardia infection has become recognized as one of the most common causes of waterborne disease (found in both drinking and recreational water) in humans in the United States. The state of Oklahoma requires healthcare providers and laboratories to report all diagnosed cases of *Giardia*. While the number of reported cases is low, it is believed that actual numbers of diarrheal illness caused by *Giardia* are considerably higher but go unreported due to inadequate testing.

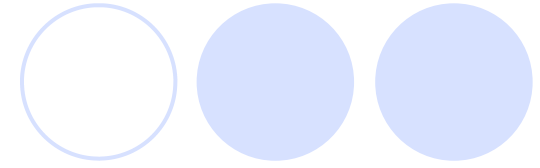


TULSA HEALTH DEPARTMENT

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Giardiasis



What is Giardia?

Giardiasis is a diarrheal disease caused by *Giardia intestinalis*, a one-celled microscopic parasite that lives in the intestine of people and animals. The parasite is passed in the stool of an infected person or animal. The parasite is protected by an outer shell that allows it to survive outside the body, and in the environment for long periods of time.

How is Giardia infection diagnosed?

Your health care provider will likely ask for stool samples to be submitted to test for the parasite. Because it is difficult to diagnose, several stool samples may be requested over a few days.

Who is at risk?

Everyone. Persons at **increased** risk include:

- * Child care workers and children who attend day care centers,
- * International travelers,
- * People who swallow water from contaminated sources,
- * Swimmers, campers, hikers and backpackers who drink or swallow untreated and unfiltered water from lakes, rivers, ponds and streams, and
- * People who drink from shallow wells.

What are symptoms of Giardia?

Giardia infection can cause a variety of symptoms, which include:

- * Diarrhea,
- * Gas,
- * Greasy stools that tend to float,
- * Stomach cramps, and
- * Upset stomach or nausea

These symptoms may lead to weight loss and dehydration. Some people with giardiasis have no symptoms at all.

Symptoms of giardiasis normally begin 1 to 2 (average 7 days) after becoming infected but may take as long as 25 days. In an otherwise healthy person, symptoms of giardiasis may last 2 to 6 weeks, and occasionally longer.

Where are Giardia found?

Giardia live in the intestine of infected humans or animals. You can become infected after accidentally swallowing the parasite. *Giardia* may be found in:

- * Soil
- * Water
- * Food, such as, fruits and vegetables
- * Surfaces that have come in contact with the feces of an infected animal or human.



How is Giardia spread?

Giardia can be spread by:

- * Putting something in your mouth or accidentally swallowing something that has come in contact with the stool of an infected person/animal;
- * Swallowing recreational water contaminated with *Giardia*; or
- * Eating uncooked food contaminated with *Giardia*.

If I have Giardia should I worry about spreading it?

Yes, *Giardia* is **very** contagious. Follow these steps to avoid spreading the infection if diagnosed:

- * Wash hands with soap and water after using the toilet, changing diapers, and before eating or preparing food;
- * Avoid fecal exposure during sex;
- * Avoid swimming in recreational water (pools, hot tubs, lakes, etc.) if you have *Giardia*.



Giardia can be passed in stool and can contaminate water for several weeks after symptoms have ended.