

GIARDIASIS

Consult the health department before posting/distributing Parent/Guardian fact sheet.

CAUSE	<i>Giardia lamblia</i> , a parasite.
SYMPTOMS	Gas, stomach cramps and bloating, nausea, diarrhea (possibly ongoing or recurring), loss of appetite, and weight loss. Children who are infected often show no symptoms. Illness usually lasts between 2 to 6 weeks.
SPREAD	<i>Giardia</i> parasites leave the body through the stool of an infected person and enter another person when hands, food, or objects (such as toys) contaminated with stool are placed in the mouth. Spread can occur when people do not wash their hands after using the toilet or changing diapers. Spread can occur whether or not a person feels sick.
INCUBATION	It takes 1 to 4 weeks, usually 7 to 10 days, from the time a person is exposed until symptoms develop.
CONTAGIOUS PERIOD	As long as <i>Giardia</i> parasites are present in the stool a person can pass the germs on to other people. <i>Giardia</i> can be present in stool for several weeks or months after symptoms have stopped.
EXCLUSION	<p><u>Childcare</u>: Children infected with <i>Giardia</i> who have symptoms should be excluded until 24 hours after treatment has been started and diarrhea has stopped. Children who have <i>Giardia</i> in their stools but who have no symptoms do not need to be excluded.</p> <p><u>School</u>: None, unless the child is not feeling well and/or has diarrhea and needs to use the bathroom frequently. Exclusion may be necessary during outbreaks.</p> <p>Everyone with <i>Giardia</i> should not use swimming beaches, pools, water parks, spas, or hot tubs for 2 weeks after diarrhea has stopped.</p> <p>Staff with <i>Giardia</i> may be restricted from working in food service. Call your local health department to see if these restrictions apply.</p>
DIAGNOSIS	Recommend parents/guardians call their healthcare provider if their child has symptoms of giardiasis. There is a lab test to detect <i>Giardia</i> in the stool.
TREATMENT	Treatment is available. Vomiting and diarrhea may lead to dehydration, which may be a medical emergency. Ask a healthcare provider how to prevent dehydration.

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PREVENTION/CONTROL

- Wash hands thoroughly with soap and warm running water after using the toilet and changing diapers and before preparing or eating food. **Thorough handwashing is the best way to prevent the spread of communicable diseases.**

Staff should closely monitor handwashing of all children after children have used the bathroom or have been diapered.

- DO NOT allow children to swallow water when swimming in lakes or swimming pools, using hot tubs, or playing in fountains.
- Clean and disinfect diapering area and potty chairs after each use and bathroom toilets, sinks, and toys at least daily and when soiled.
- Clean and disinfect mouthed toys, objects, or surfaces at least daily and when soiled.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Kentucky Department for Public Health Frankfort, KY
Kentucky Regional Poison Center Louisville, KY
Lake Cumberland District Health Department Somerset KY
The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) Atlanta, GA

<http://chfs.ky.gov/dph/>
EMERGENCY: 1-800-222-1222
www.lcdhd.org (606) 678-4761
Toll free: 1-800-311-3435 www.cdc.gov