



GIARDIA FACT SHEET

WHAT IS GIARDIA?

Giardia is a diarrheal illness caused by a parasite.

HOW DO YOU GET GIARDIA?

Spread occurs via the fecal-oral route such as swallowing Giardia picked up from an infected person or animal. Transmission also occurs by consuming contaminated food or water. Sources of infection include contaminated water including water in swimming pools, hot tubs, jacuzzis, fountains, lakes, rivers, springs, ponds, or streams. Other sources include uncooked contaminated food and contaminated surfaces (such as bathroom fixtures, changing tables, diaper pails, or toys).

SYMPTOMS

It typically takes 1-2 weeks to show the first signs of being ill after being exposed. Some people may not experience any symptoms. Sometimes the symptoms of giardiasis might go away and then come back again after several days or weeks. When symptoms are present, they generally consist of:

- Diarrhea,
- Gas
- Stomach cramps
- Nausea
- Vomiting
- Dehydration (loss of fluids)
- Weight loss

TREATMENT

Several drugs can be used to treat Giardia infection. Discuss treatment options with your doctor.

PREVENTION

- Wash hands with soap and water after using the restroom, after changing diapers, before eating or preparing food, and after contact with animals.
- Shower before you get in the pool.
- Do not swim if you have diarrhea.
- Avoid swallowing water when swimming or playing in lakes, ponds, streams, swimming pools.
- Take frequent bathroom breaks and change diapers in the restroom- not poolside.
- Any person infected with Giardia who attends or works at a child care center or is employed in a sensitive occupation (direct food handling or direct patient care) should be excluded.

DGHD EFFORTS

Reports of suspected and confirmed cases of disease are made to the Delaware General Health District (DGHD). The DGHD investigates potential sources of illness, conducts surveillance for the spread of disease, and engages in community outreach and education.