



AMEBIASIS FACT SHEET

WHAT IS AMEBIASIS?

Amebiasis is an infection caused by the parasite, *Entamoeba histolytica*. The disease is more common in people who live in tropical or subtropical areas with poor sanitary conditions or people traveling to these areas. Anyone can get amebiasis. It typically takes 2 to 4 weeks to show the first signs of being ill after being exposed to the parasite.

HOW DO YOU GET AMEBIASIS?

People can get amebiasis by consuming food or water contaminated with feces containing the parasite or by touching contaminated surfaces.

SYMPTOMS

Only 10-20% of people infected with amebiasis become sick from the infection. Symptoms may be mild and include diarrhea, stomach pain and cramping. Severe amebiasis is also called amebic dysentery and can cause stomach pain, bloody stool, and fever.

TREATMENT

If you think you have amebiasis, please see your healthcare provider. The infection may be difficult to diagnosis, but antibiotics are an effective treatment.

PREVENTION

When traveling to a country with poor sanitary conditions:

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- Drink bottled water with an unbroken seal, sealed carbonated water or drinks from bottles or cans, or tap water that has been boiled for at least 1 minute
- Avoid fountain drinks or any drinks with ice cubes
- Avoid fresh fruit and vegetables that you did not peel yourself
- Avoid milk, cheese, or dairy products that may not have been pasteurized
- Avoid food or drinks sold by street vendors
- Practice good hand hygiene by washing hands with soap and warm water for at least 20 seconds

SHOULD AN INFECTED PERSON BE EXCLUDED FROM WORK OR SCHOOL?

Any person who attends or works at a childcare center or works in a sensitive occupation preparing/serving food or provides direct patient care shall be excluded and may return after diarrhea has ceased and three follow-up stool specimens are negative for amebiasis (Ohio Administrative Code 3701-3-13).

DPHD EFFORTS:

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