

What kind of infection is it?

Giardia is a single celled parasite.

How do people get infected?

- *Giardia* causes illness when a person swallows *Giardia* from water contaminated with the stool (poop) of a person or animal with *Giardia*.
- Swallowing contaminated water while swimming in lakes, rivers or ponds can cause *Giardia*.
- *Giardia* can also be picked up from surfaces contaminated with *Giardia*, such as changing tables, diaper pails or toilets.
- *Giardia* can spread in child care centers.
- *Giardia* can be spread from an ill person through poor hygiene or sexual contact.

What are the usual symptoms?

- Nausea, loss of appetite, gas, bloating, diarrhea, greasy floating stools.

How long does it last?

- Without treatment symptoms can last from a few days to months.

How is it treated?

- Prevent and treat dehydration. Warning signs of dehydration include dry mouth, decreased urination, or dizziness.
- A number of prescription drugs can be used to treat *Giardia*. Take any medication you are prescribed as directed.

Are there possible complications?

- Dehydration can occur.
- Prolonged *Giardia* can lead to significant weight loss or slow growth in children.

Comments:

- Wash hands carefully after using the bathroom, changing diapers and before and after cooking.
- To prevent *Giardia*, avoid drinking untreated water from rivers, streams, lakes or other surface waters.
- Avoid swallowing water when swimming.

Resources:

- [CDC Handout](#)