



GIARDIASIS

WHAT IS GIARDIASIS?

GIARDIASIS IS AN INTESTINAL ILLNESS CAUSED BY A PARASITE CALLED *Giardia lamblia*. IT IS A COMMON CAUSE OF DIARRHEAL DISEASE.

WHO GETS GIARDIASIS?

ANYONE CAN GET GIARDIASIS BUT IT USUALLY OCCURS MORE OFTEN IN PEOPLE IN HOSPITAL SETTINGS, PEOPLE IN DAYCARE CENTERS, FOREIGN TRAVELERS AND PEOPLE WHO MIGHT DRINK INFECTED SURFACE WATER.

WHERE ARE THE *Giardia* PARASITES FOUND?

GIARDIA HAS BEEN FOUND IN INFECTED PEOPLE (WITH OR WITHOUT SYMPTOMS) AND WILD AND DOMESTIC ANIMALS. THE BEAVER HAS GAINED ATTENTION AS A POTENTIAL SOURCE OF GIARDIA CONTAMINATION OF LAKES AND STREAMS.

HOW IS THIS PARASITE SPREAD?

THE *Giardia* PARASITE IS SHED IN THE FECES OF AN INFECTED PERSON OR ANIMAL AND MAY INFECT WATER OR FOOD. PERSON-TO-PERSON TRANSMISSION MAY ALSO OCCUR IN DAYCARE CENTERS OR OTHER PLACES WHERE HAND-WASHING PRACTICES ARE POOR.

WHAT ARE THE SYMPTOMS OF GIARDIASIS?

PEOPLE INFECTED WITH *Giardia* MAY HAVE DIARRHEA OR SOMETIMES NO SYMPTOMS AT ALL. FEVER IS UNUSUAL. OCCASIONALLY, SOME WILL HAVE DIARRHEA LASTING OVER SEVERAL WEEKS OR MONTHS, CAUSING WEIGHT LOSS.

HOW SOON DO SYMPTOMS APPEAR?

THE SYMPTOMS MAY APPEAR FROM THREE TO 25 DAYS AFTER INFECTION, BUT USUALLY WITHIN 10 DAYS.

WHAT IS THE TREATMENT FOR GIARDIASIS?

MEDICATION IS GIVEN TO TREAT GIARDIASIS, BUT SOME PEOPLE GET BETTER WITHOUT MEDICATION.

WHAT CAN A PERSON OR COMMUNITY DO TO PREVENT THE SPREAD OF GIARDIASIS?

- CAREFULLY WASH HANDS THOROUGHLY AFTER TOILET VISITS.
- CAREFULLY DISPOSE OF SEWAGE WASTES SO AS NOT TO INFECT SURFACE WATER OR GROUNDWATER.
- AVOID DRINKING UNTREATED WATER FROM SPRINGS, STREAMS OR LAKES.