

Giardiasis

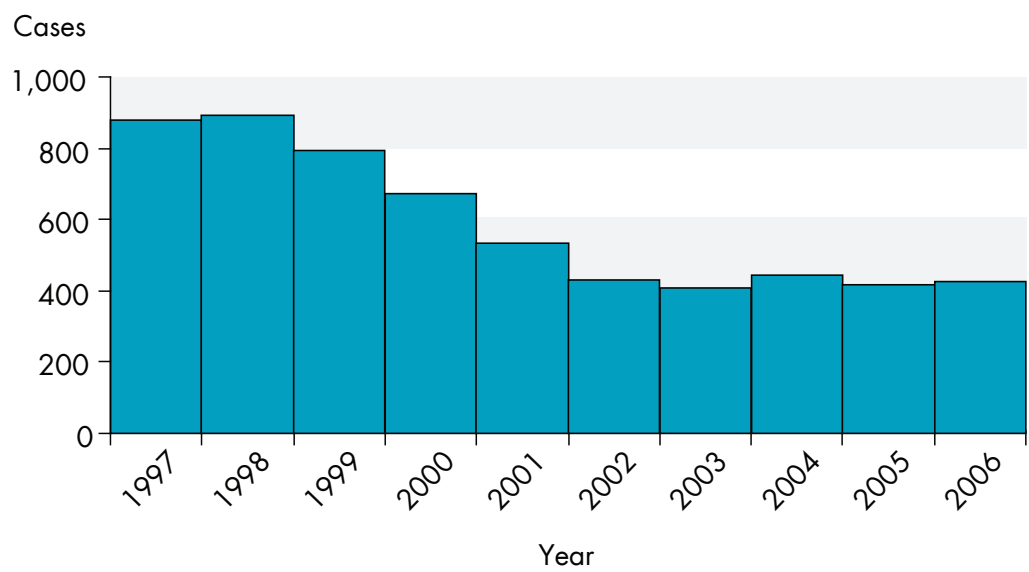
Giardia intestinalis, the flagellated protozoan originally named *G. lamblia*, is the most commonly identified parasitic pathogen in the U.S. Children in day care and their close contacts are at greatest risk, as are backpackers and campers (by drinking unfiltered, untreated water), persons drinking from shallow wells, travelers to disease-endemic areas, and men who have sex with men. *Giardia* cysts can be excreted in the stool intermittently for weeks or months, resulting in a protracted period of communicability. Transmission occurs when cysts (as few as 10) are ingested through person-to-person or animal-to-person contact, or by ingestion of fecally contaminated water or food.

The majority of *Giardia* infections occur without symptoms. When symptomatic, patients report chronic diarrhea, steatorrhea, abdominal cramps, bloating, frequent loose and pale greasy stools, fatigue, and weight loss.

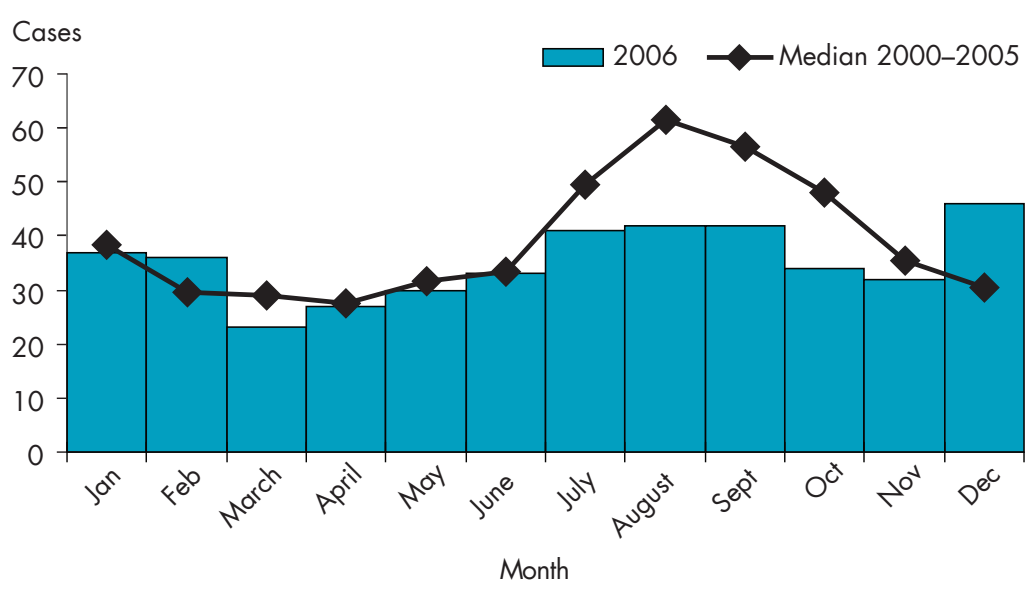
In 2006, the reported incidence of giardiasis in Oregon was nearly twice that of the rest of the U.S., with 11.5 cases per 100,000 population. Most 2006 cases were reported as sporadic or household-associated; however, an outbreak at a day-care center in Coos County resulted in six cases. Children less than 5 years of age continue to have the highest incidence, with 34 cases/100,000. Rates of infection tend to be higher in the summer months with transmission related to outdoor activities in or near untreated water.

Prevention depends upon good personal hygiene (hand washing!) and avoiding consumption of fecally contaminated water. Travel warnings on water quality should be heeded.

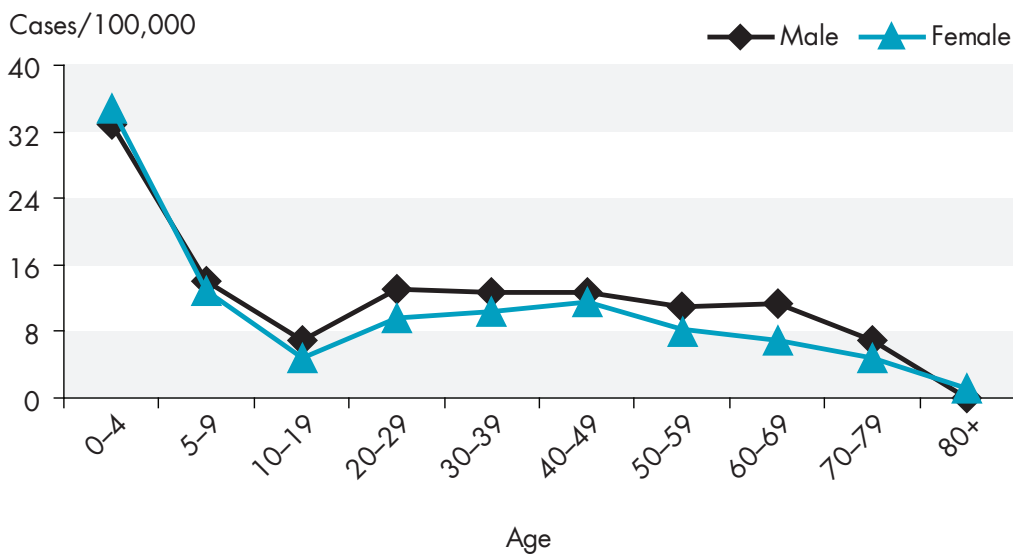
Giardiasis by year - Oregon, 1997-2006



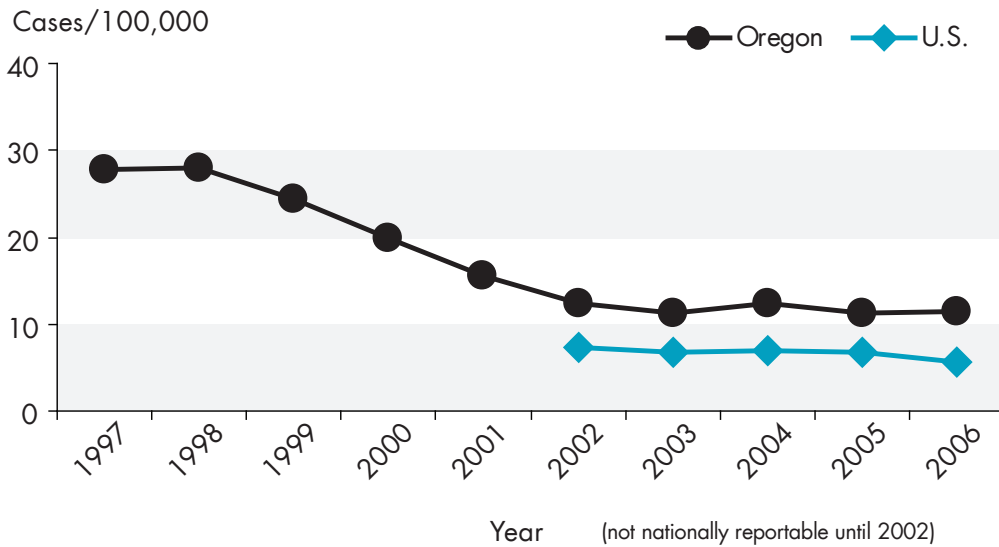
Giardiasis by onset month - Oregon, 2006



Incidence of giardiasis by age and sex - Oregon, 2006



Incidence of giardiasis - Oregon vs. nationwide, 1997-2006



Incidence of giardiasis by county of residence - Oregon, 2006

