

Giardiasis

Giardia intestinalis, the flagellated protozoan originally named *G. lamblia*, is the most commonly identified parasitic pathogen in the United States. Children in daycare and their close contacts are at greatest risk, as are backpackers and campers (from 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 as few as 10 cysts are ingested through person-to-person or animal-to-person contact, or by ingesting fecally contaminated water or food. Because most human cases follow person-to-person transmission, identification and treatment of giardiasis as well as management of their contacts should prevent further spread of infection.

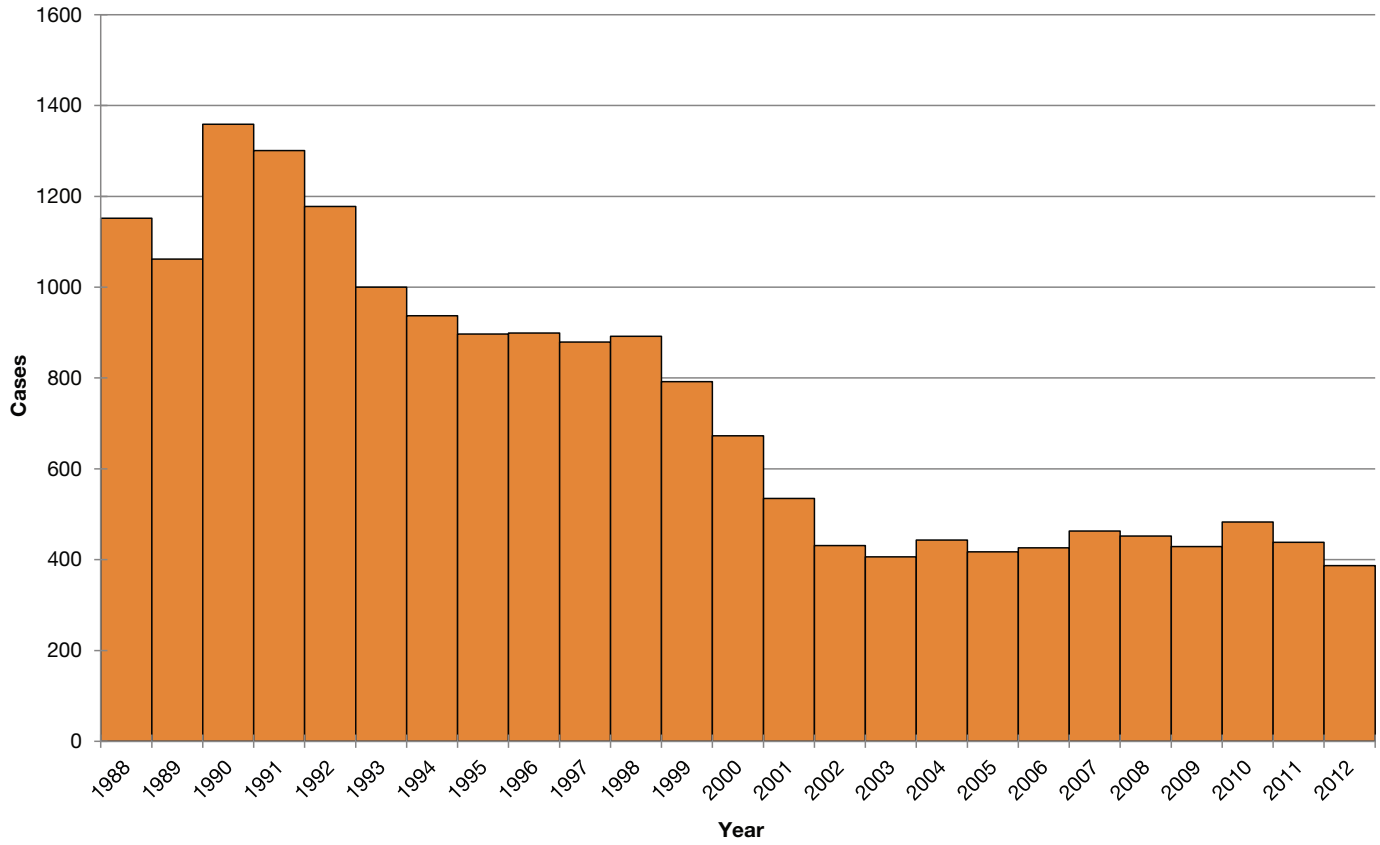
Most *Giardia* infections occur without symptoms. When symptomatic, patients report

chronic diarrhea, steatorrhea, abdominal cramps, bloating, frequent loose and pale, greasy stools, fatigue, and weight loss.

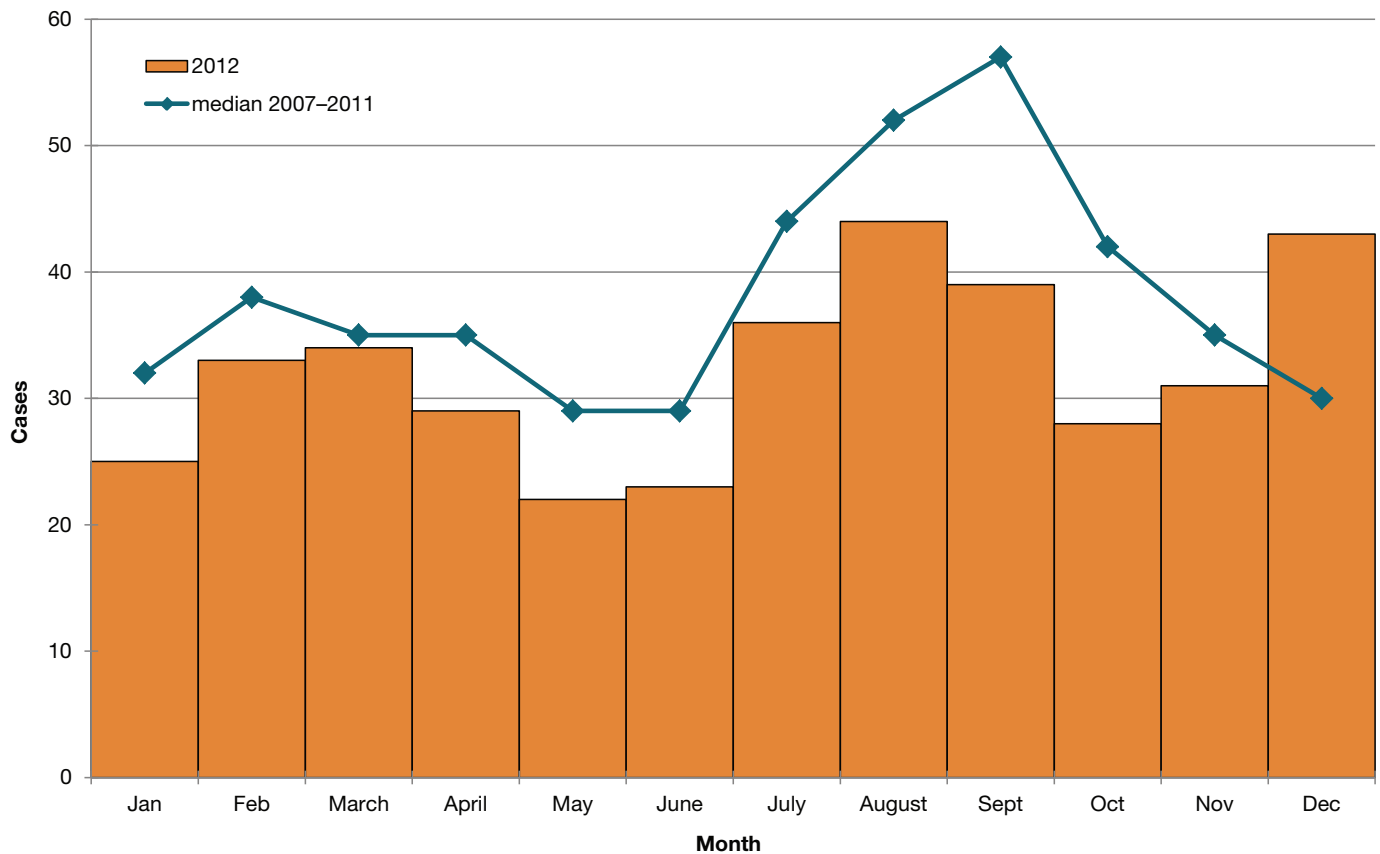
In 2012, the reported incidence of giardiasis in Oregon remained twice that of the rest of the United States, with 9.9 cases per 100,000 persons. During 2012, 90% of the cases were reported as “sporadic” and 9% as household-associated; one outbreak was reported. Children less than 5 years of age continue to have the highest incidence, with 19 cases per 100,000 population. Rates of infection tend to be higher in the summer months with transmission related to outdoor activities in or near untreated water.

Giardiasis is treatable, though treatment fails ~10% of the time. Treatment failure, however, is not thought to indicate resistance. A repeat course of the same or a different medication may work.

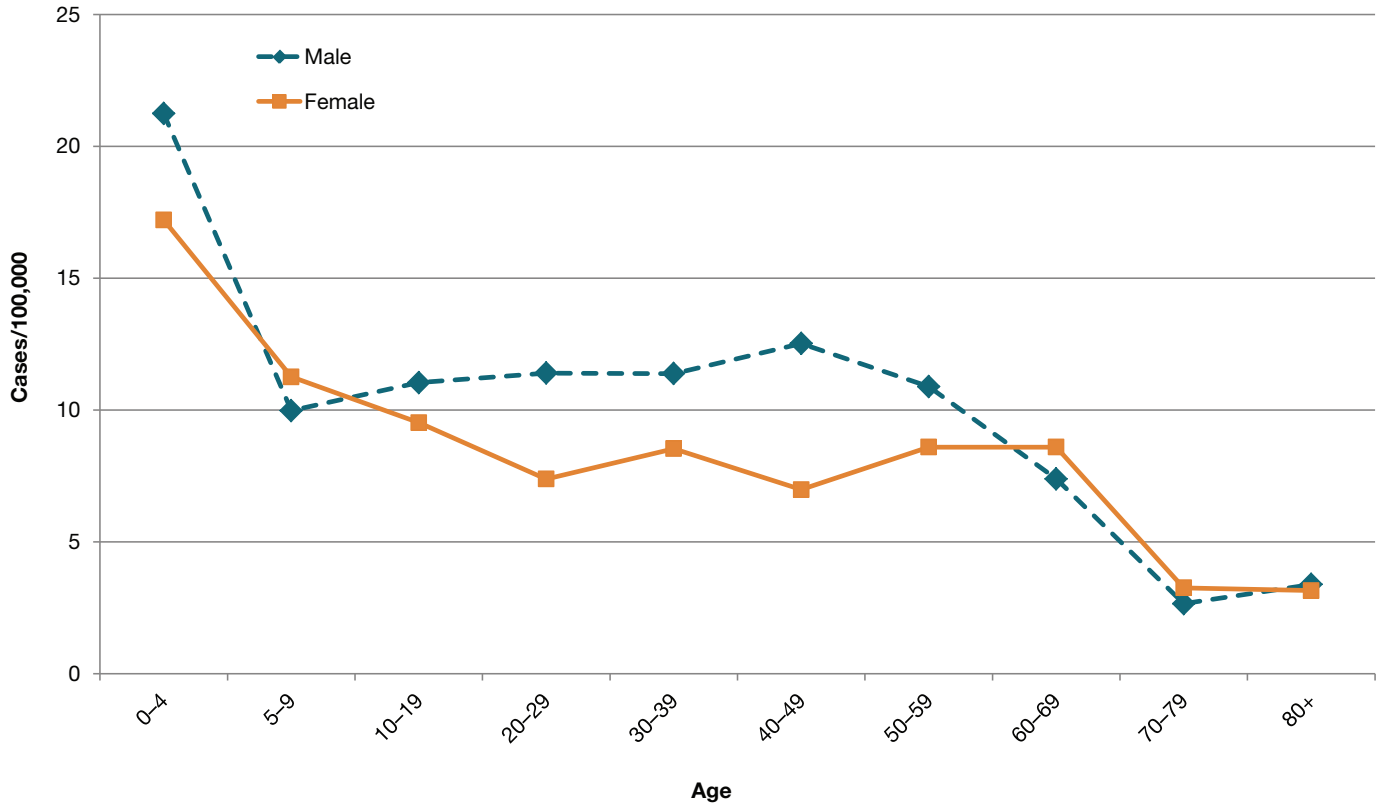
Giardiasis by year: Oregon, 1988–2012



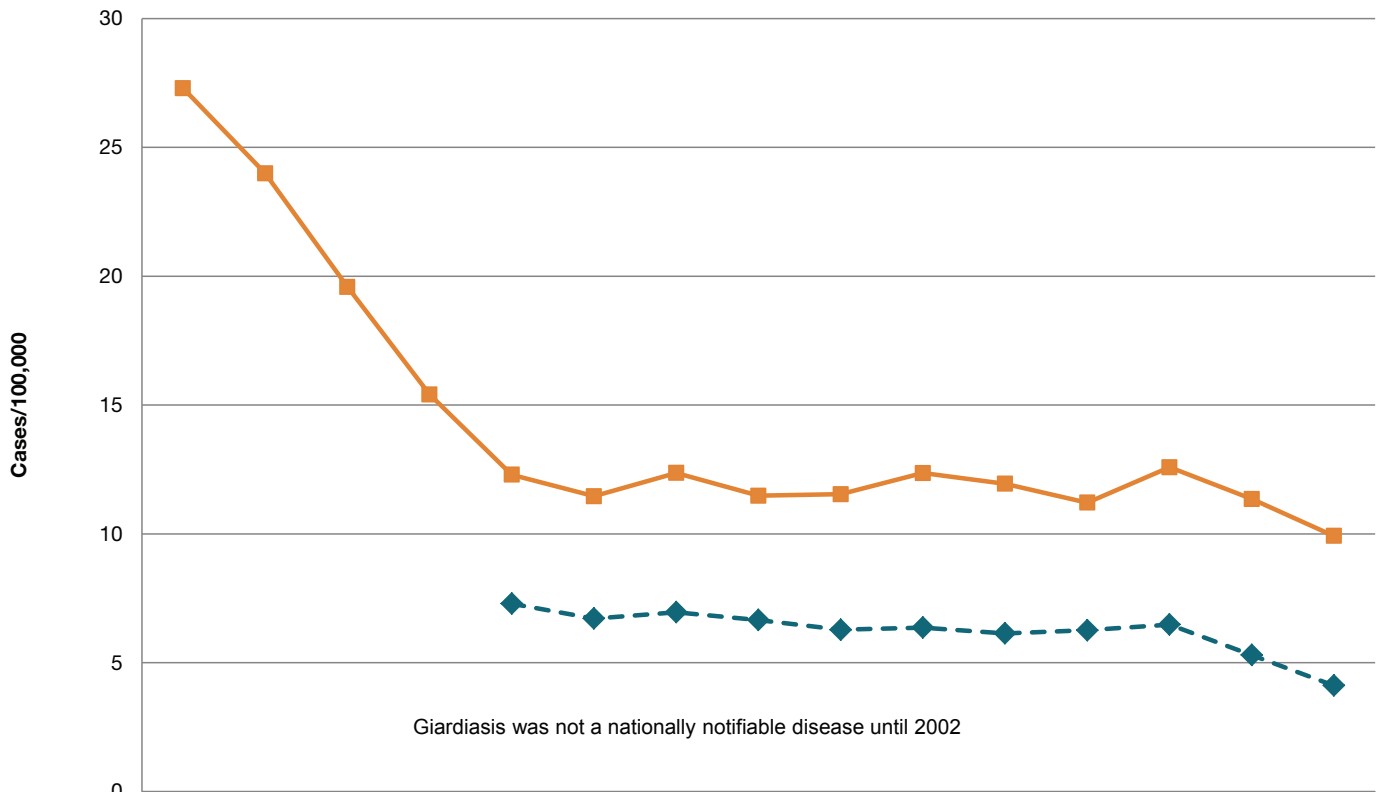
Giardiasis by onset month: Oregon, 2012



Incidence of giardiasis by age and sex: Oregon, 2012

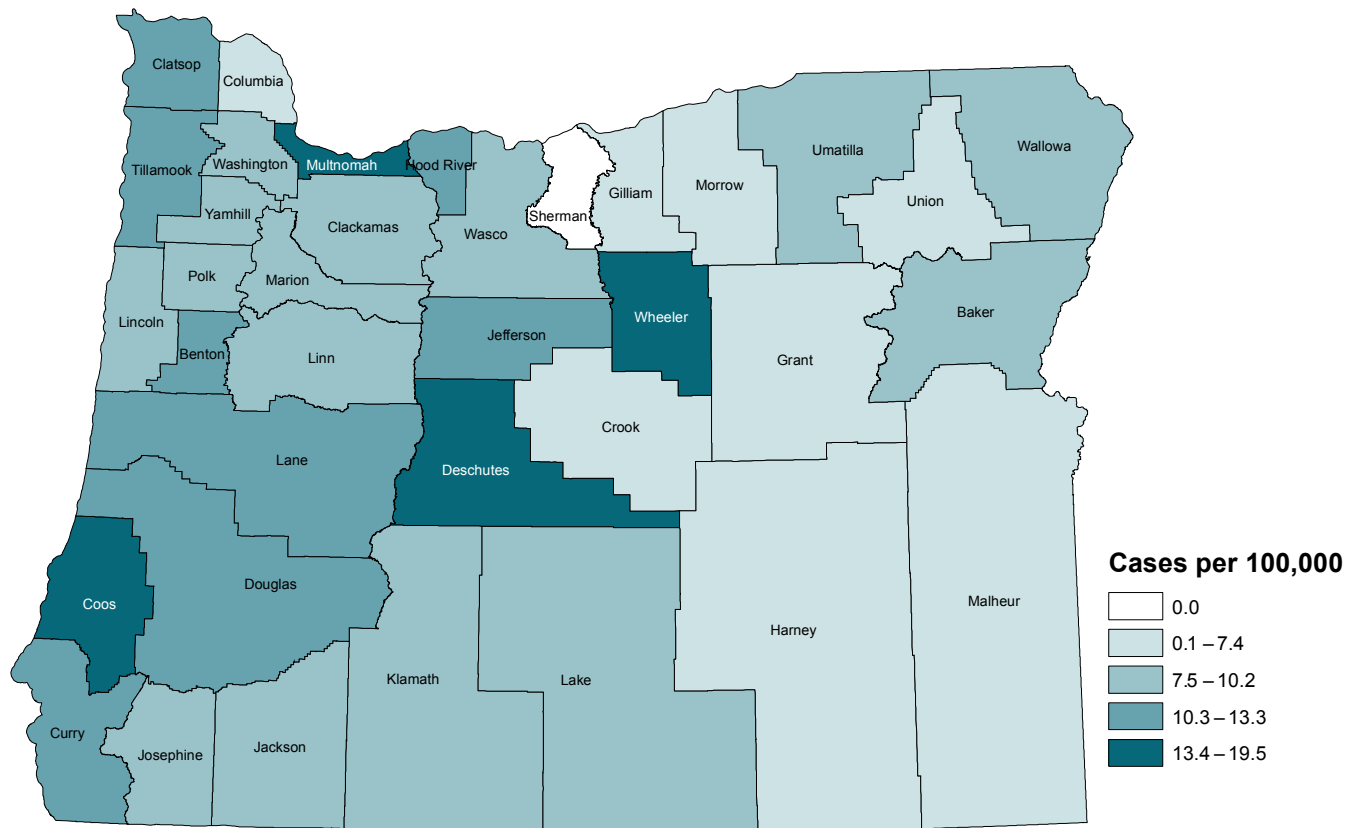


Incidence of giardiasis: Oregon vs. nationwide, 1998–2012



	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
— Oregon	27.3	24.0	19.6	15.4	12.3	11.5	12.4	11.5	11.5	12.4	11.9	11.2	12.6	11.4	9.9
— US					7.3	6.7	7.0	6.7	6.3	6.4	6.1	6.3	6.5	5.3	4.1

Incidence of giardiasis by county of residence: Oregon, 2003–2012



Prevention

- Wash hands with soap carefully and frequently, especially after going to the bathroom, after changing diapers, or after touching livestock. Supervise hand washing of toddlers and small children after they use the toilet.
- Do not work or attend daycare, serve or prepare food, or work in health care while ill with diarrhea.
- Refrain from recreational water activities (pools, hot tubs, splash pads) for 2 weeks after symptoms from a bout of giardiasis subside.
- Do not drink untreated surface water.