

Giardiasis

What is Giardiasis?

Giardiasis is an intestinal infection caused by the protozoan *Giardia lamblia*.

How is it transmitted?

Giardiasis is transmitted through fecal-oral contamination. People and animals infected with *Giardia* pass it in their stool. Eating contaminated food or water may lead to infection. Rivers, lakes, ponds, or pools may harbor the protozoan. Improperly installed or maintained wells or springs may also harbor *Giardia*.

What are common symptoms?

The most common symptoms of giardiasis include diarrhea, abdominal cramps, pale and greasy stools, weight loss, fatigue, and bloating. Symptoms may last for days or weeks, or may be intermittent. Symptoms usually appear one to three weeks after infection. Some people with giardiasis show no symptoms.

Will my pet develop Giardiasis?

Many animals do not show symptoms of infection. The most common symptoms in dogs and cats include weight loss, inability to gain weight, diarrhea, vomiting, lack of appetite, and greasy stools.

How is it diagnosed?

Your health care provider diagnoses giardiasis from a stool sample.

How can it be treated?

Your health care provider may prescribe anti-protozoal medication. Supportive care is also important in cases of severe diarrhea and dehydration.

Can it be prevented?

Practice good hygiene. Wash hands after toileting and before cooking. Avoid swimming in water that may be

contaminated and do not swim if you have diarrhea.

This fact sheet provides general information. Please contact your physician or veterinarian for specific information related to you or your animals.

For more information go to:

- **Centers for Disease Control**
www.cdc.gov
- **National Association of State Public Health Veterinarians** www.nasphv.org