



Giardiasis (Beaver Fever)

What is giardiasis?

- Giardiasis is an infection of the intestines caused by the parasite *Giardia lamblia*.
- The parasite can be found in the stool of infected animals or humans.

How does a person get giardiasis?

- Shallow wells, streams and lakes may be sources of infection.
- Infection occurs when a person drinks water or eats food contaminated with the parasite.
- The parasite can be spread from person to person if hands are not washed thoroughly.

What are the signs and symptoms?

- Often a person will have no symptoms. If symptoms occur, they usually appear 1 to 3 weeks following infection.
- Diarrhea is the most common symptom. The stool is usually pale, greasy, and foul-smelling.
- Other symptoms include stomach cramps, gas, loss of appetite, tiredness, and weight loss.
- Symptoms may come and go for several months.

How is giardiasis treated?

- See your doctor for treatment.
- Drink plenty of fluids to replace water lost through diarrhea.

How is giardiasis prevented?

- Always wash hands thoroughly:
 - after using the toilet
 - after diapering a child
 - before preparing or handling food
 - before eating.
- Consider all untreated water to be infected.
- On recreational trips, always boil water from streams or snow for 1 minute before drinking.
- Be careful to avoid swallowing water when swimming, especially in lakes or streams
- Do not attend daycare, school or place of work if symptoms are present.

Quick Facts

- intestinal infection
- caused by a parasite
- may be found in untreated water
- prevent by boiling untreated water

For more information contact your doctor
or Population and Public Health at **306-655-4612**