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Parasites

Parasites

Parasites are any organism that derives its food, nutrition and shelter by living in or on another organisms. We often perceive parasites to be a disease of developing countries however parasites in the U.S. affects millions of people. The Centers for Disease Control (CDC) estimates that between 100,000- 1,000,000 cases of *Giardia lamblia* occur each year in Americans, and that one in every six people, selected at random, had one or more parasites. Most parasitic infections probably result from ingestion of food or water contaminated with sewage. Other factors which have contributed to the increase in parasitic infection are travel, water contamination, day care centers, increased immigration, armed forces, pets, processed and sugary foods, antibiotics and immunosuppressive drugs and HIV/AIDS.

The goal of any parasitic treatment is to eradicate the parasites and not just relieve the symptoms. People who live together can infect one another when making food or sharing the bathroom. It is a good idea to treat all household members at the same time. The protocol for treatment of gastrointestinal parasites is:

- Cleansing** the intestinal tract
- Modifying** the diet
- Administering** parasitic elimination substances
- Recolonizing** the GI tract with friendly bacteria
- Avoiding** re-infection by eliminating risk factors

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