



Home → Health Topics → Giardia Infections

URL of this page: <https://medlineplus.gov/giardia-infections.html>

Giardia Infections

Giardiasis is an illness caused by a parasite called *Giardia intestinalis*. It lives in soil, food, and water. It may also be on surfaces that have been contaminated with waste. You can become infected if you swallow the parasite. You can also get it if you're exposed to human feces (poop) through sexual contact.

The risk of getting giardia is higher for travelers to countries where it is common, people in child care settings, and those who drink untreated water.

Diarrhea is the main symptom of giardia infection. Others include:

- Passing gas
- Greasy stools
- Stomach cramps
- Upset stomach or nausea

These symptoms may lead to weight loss and loss of body fluids. Some people have no symptoms at all. Symptoms of infection often last two to six weeks. Stool sample tests can diagnose it. You often need to collect several samples to test. Doctors use several drugs to treat it.

The best way to prevent giardia infection is to practice good hygiene, including frequent hand washing. You should not drink water that may be contaminated. You should also peel or wash fresh fruit and vegetables before eating.

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

Start Here

- About Giardia [<https://www.cdc.gov/giardia/about/>] (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention)
- Giardia Infection (Giardiasis) [<https://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/giardia-infection/symptoms-causes/syc-20372786?p=1>] (Mayo Foundation for Medical Education and Research)
Also in Spanish [<https://www.mayoclinic.org/es/diseases-conditions/giardia-infection/symptoms-causes/syc-20372786?p=1>]
- Giardiasis [<https://familydoctor.org/condition/giardiasis/?adfree=true>] (American Academy of Family Physicians)
Also in Spanish [<https://es.familydoctor.org/condicion/giardiasis-es/?adfree=true>]

Symptoms

- Symptoms of Giardia Infection [<https://www.cdc.gov/giardia/signs-symptoms/>] (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention)

Diagnosis and Tests

- Diagnosis of Parasitic Diseases [<https://www.cdc.gov/parasites/testing-diagnosis/>] (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention)
- Ova and Parasite Test [<https://medlineplus.gov/lab-tests/ova-and-parasite-test/>]  (National Library of Medicine)
Also in Spanish [<https://medlineplus.gov/spanish/pruebas-de-laboratorio/prueba-de-huevos-y-parasitos/>]

- String test for intestinal parasites [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/003735.htm>] (Medical Encyclopedia)
Also in Spanish [<https://medlineplus.gov/spanish/ency/article/003735.htm>]

Prevention and Risk Factors

- Giardia Infection Prevention and Control [<https://www.cdc.gov/giardia/prevention/>] (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention)

Treatments and Therapies

- Treatment of Giardia Infection [<https://www.cdc.gov/giardia/treatment/>] (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention)

Related Issues

- About Giardia and Pets [<https://www.cdc.gov/giardia/about/about-giardia-and-pets.html>]
(Centers for Disease Control and Prevention)
- Germs That Can Contaminate Tap Water [<https://www.cdc.gov/drinking-water/causes/germs-that-can-contaminate-tap-water.html>]
(Centers for Disease Control and Prevention)
- Water Disinfection for Travelers [<https://www.cdc.gov/yellow-book/hcp/preparing-international-travelers/water-disinfection-for-travelers.html>]
(Centers for Disease Control and Prevention)

Clinical Trials

- ClinicalTrials.gov: Giardiasis [<https://clinicaltrials.gov/search?cond=%22Giardiasis%22&aggFilters=status:not%20rec>]
 (National Institutes of Health)

Journal Articles

References and abstracts from MEDLINE/PubMed (National Library of Medicine)

- Article: Evaluation of a Combined Text Messaging and Online Survey Protocol for... [<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/40674338>]
- Article: Establishment of an in vitro co-infection model of Cryptosporidium parvum and... [<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/40652254>]
- Article: Prevalence of Nitroimidazole-Refractory Giardiasis Acquired in Different World Regions, Sweden, 2008-2020. [<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/40439525>]
- Giardia Infections -- see more articles [<https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/?term=%22Giardiasis%22%5Bmajr%3Aexp%5D+AND+humans%5Bmh%5D+AND+english%5Bla%5D+AND+%22last+1+Year%22+%5Bdat%5D+NOT+%28letter%5Bpt%5D+OR+case+reports%5Bpt%5D+OR+editorial%5Bpt%5D+OR+comment%5Bpt%5D%29+AND+free+full+text%5Bsb%5D+>]

Find an Expert

- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention [<https://www.cdc.gov/>]
Also in Spanish [<https://www.cdc.gov/spanish/>]
- National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases [<https://www.niaid.nih.gov/>] 

Children

- Giardiasis (For Parents) [<https://kidshealth.org/en/parents/giardiasis.html>]
Also in Spanish [<https://kidshealth.org/es/parents/giardiasis.html>]

Patient Handouts

- Giardiasis [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/000288.htm>]
Also in Spanish [<https://medlineplus.gov/spanish/ency/article/000288.htm>]
- Stool ova and parasites exam [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/003756.htm>]
Also in Spanish [<https://medlineplus.gov/spanish/ency/article/003756.htm>]



MEDICAL ENCYCLOPEDIA

Giardiasis [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/000288.htm>]

Stool ova and parasites exam [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/003756.htm>]

Related Health Topics

Drinking Water [<https://medlineplus.gov/drinkingwater.html>]

Parasitic Diseases [<https://medlineplus.gov/parasiticdiseases.html>]

National Institutes of Health

The primary NIH organization for research on *Giardia Infections* is the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases [<http://www.niaid.nih.gov/>]

MedlinePlus links to health information from the National Institutes of Health and other federal government agencies. MedlinePlus also links to health information from non-government Web sites. See our [disclaimer](#) [<https://medlineplus.gov/disclaimers.html>] about external links and our [quality guidelines](#) [<https://medlineplus.gov/criteria.html>].

The information on this site should not be used as a substitute for professional medical care or advice. Contact a health care provider if you have questions about your health.

[Learn how to cite this page](#)