



Communicable Diseases

Giardiasis



What is it?

- Giardiasis is an illness caused by the parasite *Giardia lamblia*
- It lives in the intestines of humans and animals and is passed in the stool
- Giardia affects children more often than adults

Signs and Symptoms

- Symptoms may include diarrhea, foul smelling stool, stomach cramps, severe gas, weight loss, fatigue and dehydration
- Carriers may be asymptomatic (without symptoms)
- Symptoms usually last 2-6 weeks but occasionally become chronic
- Illness is self-limiting although treatment is often prescribed
- There is no immunity from Giardiasis to prevent re-infection
- Severe cases may damage intestinal cells

Incubation Period

- A person can become ill 3-25 days after ingesting the parasite. However 7-10 days is most common.

Quick Facts:

- Giardiasis is an illness caused by the parasite *Giardia lamblia*
- Giardia can be found in contaminated soil, food, water or on surfaces
- Avoid drinking untreated or unfiltered surface water

How Giardia is Spread

- A person becomes infected by ingesting Giardia cysts usually in food or water
- Giardia can be spread from person to person
- Other modes of transmission include ingesting untreated or unfiltered surface water (lakes) or recreational water (swimming pools)

Prevention

- Wash hands thoroughly with uncontaminated water:
 - ▶ After using the toilet
 - ▶ After diapering
 - ▶ After handling pets or livestock
 - ▶ Before preparing or handling food
 - ▶ Before eating
- Do not drink untreated or unfiltered surface water (lakes, rivers etc)
- If uncertain of drinking water quality, bring water to a rolling boil for one minute

For more information contact your doctor, Public Health Inspector or Public Health Services:

Moose Jaw office - (306) 691-1500
Central Butte office - (306) 796-2130
Assiniboia office - (306) 642-2200
Gravelbourg office- (306) 648-1400
Sask Health Line- 1-877-800-0002