

Giardiasis



Clinical Description:

Giardiasis is a diarrheal disease caused by the microscopic parasite *Giardia intestinalis*. Symptoms can include diarrhea, gas, greasy stools that tend to float, bloating, stomach cramps, fever, nausea, and constipation. Symptoms usually last about 2 - 6 weeks.

Incubation Period:

Symptoms usually begin within 7 - 10 days, range of 3 - 25 days, after exposure.

Mode of Transmission:

Giardia is transmitted by contaminated food or water or person-to-person by the fecal-oral route.

Period of Communicability:

A person can spread *Giardia* while symptomatic. Infected people can also carry *Giardia* for weeks or months. They may or may not have symptoms and can unknowingly infect others.

Exclusion/Reporting:

Symptomatic persons diagnosed with *Giardia* or symptomatic persons linked by person, place, or time to a case are excluded from attending school until:

- Asymptomatic for at least 24 hours
- Disease prevention education provided by the local health department
- Completion of antiparasitic therapy

For more information on laws and rules regarding giardiasis see the ISDH Communicable Disease Reporting Rule (410 IAC 1-2.3-66.5) at: [http://www.in.gov/isdh/files/comm_dis_rule\(1\).pdf](http://www.in.gov/isdh/files/comm_dis_rule(1).pdf).

Prevention/Care:

Encourage frequent hand washing, particularly after using the restroom, assisting someone with diarrhea and/or vomiting, after contact with animals, after swimming, and before and after food preparation. Please refer to the ISDH Handwashing Campaign at <http://www.in.gov/isdh/24036.htm>. Enforce exclusion of ill students and staff members.

Outbreaks:

According to the ISDH Communicable Disease Reporting Rule (410 IAC 1-2.3) the definition of an outbreak means cases of disease occurring in a community, region, or particular population at a rate in excess of that which is normally expected. A Giardiasis outbreak is two or more cases of a similar illness shown by an investigation to have resulted from a common exposure, such as water at a common source. If an outbreak is suspected and/or documented, contact your local health department. For additional information and recommendations regarding the preparation for, and the management of an outbreak situation in a school setting, see Appendix A, "Managing an Infectious Disease Outbreak In a School Setting."

Other Resources:

Indiana State Department of Health Quick Facts Page (found on disease/condition page):

<http://bit.ly/12JLfD>

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC):

<http://www.cdc.gov/parasites/giardia/>