
Giardiasis

Giardiasis is an intestinal infection caused by the parasite *Giardia*. You are most likely to be exposed to *Giardia* from contaminated water during a camping trip, international travel, or from drinking well-water. You may also become infected by eating contaminated undercooked food. Exposure to the stool of someone who's infected can also cause infection. A distinctive and classic symptom of *Giardia* is eruptions (or burps) that smell like sulfur.

When to call your doctor

Call your health care provider if you have:

- Diarrhea, which often comes and goes.
- Stomach bloating or fullness.
- Upset stomach (nausea) or vomiting.
- Unplanned weight loss.
- Blood in your stool.
- Dehydration.

When to call 911

Call 911 if you have:

- Uncontrolled vomiting.
- Severe belly pain.

How is giardiasis treated?

You will be examined and will likely have a stool sample checked in a lab. This stool is checked for the parasite that causes the disease. If giardiasis is suspected or confirmed, you will be prescribed an antibiotic that you take for 5 to 7 days. In many cases, this clears the infection.

Preventing giardiasis



Take these steps to help prevent infection with Giardia:

- Wash your hands with clean, running water (warm or cold) after using the bathroom and before eating. Wash for at least 20 seconds. Alcohol-based hand sanitizers may not work against Giardia.
- Wash your hands each time you change a child's diaper.
- Don't drink from rivers and streams.
- Use a water treatment kit when camping.
- Wash or peel raw fruits and vegetables before using.