

## GIARDIASIS

Giardiasis is an infection of the intestines that is common in children under two years of age. Outbreaks can occur in child care settings where there are children in diapers.

**CAUSE:** *Giardia lamblia*, a parasite

**SYMPTOMS:** Gas, stomach cramps and bloating, nausea, watery or foul-smelling diarrhea (persistent or recurring), and weight loss. Very often, children are infected and show no symptoms.

**SPREAD:** *Giardia* leaves the body through the stool of an infected person and enters another person when hands, food, or objects (such as toys) contaminated with stool, are placed in the mouth. Spread can occur whether or not a person feels sick.

**INCUBATION:** It takes 3 to 25 days or longer, commonly 7-10 days, from the time a person is exposed until symptoms develop.

**CONTAGIOUS PERIOD:** As long as *Giardia* is present in the stool, a person can be a possible source of infection.



Until diarrhea has stopped. Children who show *Giardia* in their stools, but who do not have symptoms, do not need to be excluded.



**REPORTABLE!**

**Provider:** This disease is reportable to the health department. In Douglas County call 444-7214. Outside Douglas County call your local or state health department.

**Parents/guardians:** inform your child care provider if your child has this illness.



## Prevention Control

1. Wash hands thoroughly with soap and running water for at least 20 seconds after using the toilet, changing diapers, and before preparing or eating food. Thorough handwashing is the best way to prevent spread of infectious diseases found in the intestinal tract. Parent/guardians and child care providers should closely monitor handwashing of all children after bathroom use or diapering. If hand sanitizers are used, they may be used only after thorough handwashing.

2. Clean and disinfect contaminated areas (diapering area, toilets, potty-chairs) and sanitize toys at least daily and when soiled.



**1. Bleach Disinfectant**

- 1/4 cup bleach in a gallon of water
- 1 tablespoon bleach in a quart of water

PREPARE FRESH SOLUTION DAILY.

OR

**2. Commercial disinfectant that is EPA approved**

FOLLOW MANUFACTURER'S DIRECTIONS.



**1. Bleach Sanitizer (Use non-scented)**

- 1 teaspoons bleach in 1 gallon water
- 1/4 teaspoon bleach in 1 quart water

Use test strip to check concentration. Do not rinse. Air dry.

PREPARE FRESH SOLUTION DAILY.

OR

**2. Commercial or food grade sanitizer that is EPA approved**

FOLLOW MANUFACTURER'S DIRECTIONS.

3. **Diagnosis/Treatment:** Discuss this fact sheet with your physician if you or your child has symptoms of giardiasis. There is a lab test to detect *Giardia* in the stool. If *Giardia* parasites are found, treatment is available.



For more information, you or your physician may call the Douglas County Health Department at 444-7214, or your local health department.