

# GIARDIASIS

**\*\*Reportable to local or state health department\*\***

Consult the health department before posting/distributing Parent/Guardian fact sheet.

**CAUSE** *Giardia lamblia*, a parasite.

**SYMPTOMS** Gas, stomach cramps and bloating, nausea, diarrhea (possibly ongoing or recurring), loss of appetite, and weight loss. Children who are infected often show no symptoms. Illness usually lasts between 2 to 6 weeks.

**SPREAD** *Giardia* parasites leave the body through the stool of an infected person and enter another person when hands, food, or objects (such as toys) contaminated with infected stool are placed in the mouth.

Spread can occur when people do not wash their hands after using the toilet or changing diapers. Spread can occur whether or not a person feels sick.

**INCUBATION** It takes 1 to 4 weeks, usually 7 to 10 days, from the time a person is exposed until symptoms develop.

**CONTAGIOUS PERIOD** As long as *Giardia* parasites are present in the stool a person can pass the germs on to other people. *Giardia* can be present in stool for several weeks or months after symptoms have stopped.

**EXCLUSION** Childcare: Until antiparasitic therapy has been initiated, and diarrhea has stopped for  $\geq 24$  hours, and one stool specimen, collected at least 48 hours after the cessation of antiparasitic therapy is negative for *Giardia lamblia*.

School: None unless the child is not feeling well and/or has diarrhea and needs to use the bathroom frequently. Exclusion may be necessary during outbreaks.

Everyone with *Giardia* should not use swimming beaches, pools, water parks, spas, or hot tubs for 2 weeks after diarrhea has stopped.

Staff employed in sensitive duty occupations infected with *Giardia* will be restricted from work.

See: [NAC 441A.535](#)

**DIAGNOSIS** Recommend parents/guardians call their healthcare provider if their child has symptoms of giardiasis. There is a lab test to detect *Giardia* in the stool.

**TREATMENT** Treatment is available. Vomiting and diarrhea may lead to dehydration, which may become a medical emergency. Ask a healthcare provider how to prevent dehydration.

## PREVENTION/ CONTROL

- Wash hands thoroughly with soap and warm running water after using the toilet and changing diapers and before preparing or eating food.

- Thorough hand washing is the best way to prevent the spread of communicable diseases.
- Staff should closely monitor hand washing of all children after children have used the bathroom or have been diapered.
- DO NOT allow children to swallow water when swimming in lakes or swimming pools, using hot tubs, or playing in fountains.
- Clean and disinfect diapering area and potty chairs after each use and bathroom toilets, sinks, and toys at least daily and when soiled.
- Clean and disinfect mouthed toys, objects, or surfaces at least daily and when soiled.

**For more information, please contact your local health department.**

[Carson City Health & Human Services](#) (Carson City, Douglas, Lyon Counties) 775-434-1690 & 775-887-2190 (after hours)

[Central Nevada Health District](#) (Churchill, Mineral, Eureka, Pershing Counties) 775-866-7535

[Northern Nevada Public Health](#) (Washoe County) 775-328-2447 (24 hours)

[Southern Nevada Health District](#) (Clark County) 775-759-1300 (24 hours)

[Division of Public and Behavioral Health](#) (All other Counties) 775-400-0333 (24 hours)

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