

GIARDIASIS
(Reportable Disease - Report to Local Health Agency)

IMMUNIZATION: None

INCUBATION PERIOD: Usually 3-25 days or longer (4 weeks); median 7-10 days.

SYMPTOMS: Can be asymptomatic.
Variable intestinal symptoms. Acute watery diarrhea with abdominal pain, or in chronic disease, prolonged, intermittent diarrhea characterized by passage of foul-smelling feces (diarrheal or soft) associated with flatulence, bloating, anorexia, fatigue and significant weight loss.

PERIOD OF COMMUNICABILITY: Entire period of infection, usually 1-4 weeks but can be months.

MODE OF TRANSMISSION: Person-to-person via hand-to-mouth transfer of cysts from feces, especially in institutions and day care centers. May also occur as a result of ingesting contaminated water (from humans or animals) or food and by sharing objects (toys, diaper changing tables) contaminated with infested feces.

SCHOOL ATTENDANCE: Persons with diarrhea should be excluded until diarrhea has ceased. Children with positive stool cultures, who do not have diarrhea, do not need to be excluded.

CONTACTS/FOLLOW-UP: If outbreak occurs, (2 or more cases), contact Local Health Agency who will do an epidemiologic investigation to detect and treat all infected symptomatic children, staff and family members.
Notify parents of children who have been in direct contact with a symptomatic, stool culture positive child. They should contact their physician if their child develops diarrhea or signs of chronic illness that may be associated with giardia infection (watery diarrhea, abdominal cramps, bloated abdomen, swelling, significant weight loss, retarded growth and/or anemia).