

## Giardia

### How does Giardia affect my pet?

Giardia is a single celled parasite which can infect both adult dogs and puppies. Infected animals typically have significant diarrhea. Long term infection can cause weight loss and generally poor condition. Some infected pets may be asymptomatic, potentially passing infection to other animals and people around them.

### How did my pet get Giardia?

Giardia is acquired from drinking water contaminated with feces of an infected animal, commonly small local creeks, ponds, and even gutters.

### How is Giardia treated and prevented?

If your veterinarian identifies Giardia in your pet's fecal sample, they will be treated with a dewormer which will kill the parasites. Giardia infections may require more than one round of medication to clear completely, so it is important to have a fecal sample rechecked at the end of treatment. Picking up your pet's stool immediately and disposing of it in plastic for 2 to 3 weeks after diagnosis will help reduce the contamination in your environment.

### What about my other pets?

If one pet in the household is diagnosed with Giardia, fecal samples from all of the other pets in the house should be examined for Giardia cysts. Some pets may not have any symptoms but could still be suffering intestinal damage from infection, as well as posing the risk of reinfesting the environment.

### How will Giardia affect my family?

Giardia is considered zoonotic, meaning it can infect both animals and people. However, Giardia in dogs is rarely passed to people. Immediately disposing of feces in plastic bags will help minimize contamination of your environment. Always wash hands thoroughly after handling fecal material.

