

# GIARDIASIS

## PERSONAL HEALTH FACT SHEET

### ***What is Giardiasis?***

*Giardiasis is an infection caused by a parasite that gets into the intestines. The parasite lays eggs that are passed out of the body with bowel movements.*

### **How is it spread?**

Giardiasis is spread to others by infected people who do not wash their hands after having a bowel movement or after changing a soiled diaper. It can also be spread by contaminated food or water. If you have been exposed to the parasite, you may develop symptoms 3-25 days later, but usually within 7-10 days.

### **How is it treated?**

Giardiasis is diagnosed by checking stool samples for the parasite or eggs. If you have this disease, your doctor can prescribe medication. Make sure you take all of the medicine, and do not stop taking the medicine even if you feel better. To determine if you are free of parasites, test stool samples after all the medication is taken.

### **How can we prevent Giardiasis?**

- Practice good hygiene and wash your hands after using the toilet and before preparing food.
- Prompt and proper treatment will help stop the spread of the parasite in day care centers to family members.
- Do not drink water from streams or lakes.

### **SYMPTOMS OF GIARDIASIS**

A person with this disease may have:

- Frequent, loose and pale greasy stools
- Abdominal cramps
- A lot of gas (bloating)
- Fatigue
- Weight loss
- Symptoms that come and go
- Some people may have the disease with no signs at all (asymptomatic)



### ***DICKINSON-IRON DISTRICT HEALTH DEPARTMENT***

***818 Pyle Drive  
Kingsford, MI 49802  
(906) 774 1868***

***601 Washington Avenue  
Iron River, MI 49935  
(906) 265 9913***

***www.didhd.org***