

Your child may have been exposed to:

## Giardiasis

Giardiasis is an infection of the intestines caused by a parasite.

### If you think your child has Giardiasis:

- Tell your childcare provider or call the school.
- **Need to stay home?**

#### Childcare:

**Yes**, for 24 hours after treatment has been started and until diarrhea has stopped.

#### School:

**No**, unless the child is not feeling well and/or has diarrhea and needs to use the bathroom frequently.

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

### Symptoms

Your child may have gas, stomach cramps, bloating, and diarrhea. They may not be hungry and may lose weight. Illness usually lasts between 2 to 6 weeks.

If your child is infected, it may take 1 to 4 weeks (usually 7 to 10 days) for symptoms to start.

### Spread

- By eating or drinking contaminated food or beverages.
- By touching contaminated hands, surfaces, or objects.

### Contagious Period

The illness can spread as long as *Giardia* parasites are in the stool. This could be for several weeks or months.

### Call your Healthcare Provider

- ◆ If anyone in your home has symptoms. There is a medical test to detect the parasite. Treatment is available.
- ◆ Ask how to prevent dehydration. Your child may lose a lot of water due to vomiting and diarrhea.

### Prevention

- Wash hands after using the toilet and changing diapers and before preparing food or eating. Your child may need help with handwashing.
- Clean and disinfect any objects that come in contact with stool. This includes toilets (potty chairs), sinks, toys, and diaper changing areas. Use a product that kills germs.
- **DO NOT** swallow water when swimming in lakes, swimming pools, water parks, hot tubs, or fountains. Spread can occur through contaminated water.

For more information, call Hennepin County HSPHD-Epidemiology at 612-543-5230 or call your local health department.