

Giardia

Giardia is a single-celled parasite that lives in your dog's intestine. It infects older dogs but more frequently infects puppies. Dogs become infected when they swallow *Giardia* that may be present in water or other substances that have been soiled with feces.

Symptoms:

Many dogs infected with *Giardia* do not get any disease. Giardiasis, the disease caused by *Giardia* infection, usually results in diarrhea. Having giardiasis for a long time can cause weight loss; poor condition; and even death.

Treatment:

The best way to prevent *Giardia* infection is to make sure that your dog has safe, clean drinking water. It is important not to allow dogs to drink water from areas where other animals have left their feces.

Your veterinarian can perform a test on your dog's feces to see if it has giardiasis. If your dog is infected with *Giardia*, your veterinarian can prescribe safe, effective treatment for control of the disease.

To prevent spreading *Giardia* (and other parasites), pick up the feces left by your dog immediately and place it in the trash. Be sure to avoid contact with the feces by using gloves, a bag over your hand, or a scooping device.

Effect on Humans:

Giardia is a common cause of diarrhea in people, but canine *Giardia* is not generally considered to spread from animals to humans. While human *Giardia* may infect dogs and then be passed on to humans, the majority of human cases are of human origin.