

# Grants Pass Water Laboratory, Inc

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## The facts of Giardia

**Giardiasis** (Also known as "Back Packers Disease," "Beaver Fever")

The disease is a parasitic infection of the upper bowel. The organism is the Giardia lamblia, a flagellate protozoan.

### Sources and routes of infection

**A. Fecal - Oral:**

1. Contaminated or inadequately treated drinking water
2. Person to person contact with infected children in diapers
3. Homosexual Contact

**B. Food Borne Transmission:**

Possible, and has been documented but food is not known to be a major vehicle for infection

**C. Carriers:**

Persons without symptoms may be more likely to transmit infection than individuals with early symptomatic disease.

### Period of Communicability

Infected persons may be communicable from several days to years

### Incubation period

One to Four weeks

### Symptoms:

Person may often be infected without symptoms. Symptoms such as diarrhea, abdominal cramps, bloating, frequent loose, and pale greasy foul smelling stools, excessive gas, nausea, fatigue and weight loss are exhibited. Difficulty with digestion of fats or fat soluble vitamins may occur. In children symptoms may appear as chronic constipation, or diarrhea, poor appetite, poor weight gain and frequent stomachache complaints.

### Prevention of Spread

1. Hand washing is required after changing diapers, before handling food products, after use of the bathroom and following contact with animals.
2. Avoid drinking untreated surface water. Boiling water at a full rolling boil 1 minute will kill Giardia. Standard concentrations of chlorine used in routine water treatment does not kill Giardia cysts.

Exclusion

**Person known or suspected of having Giardia may not attend or work in a health care facility. Exemptions to this must be approved by the local County Health Officer.**

Treatment

**Giardia can be treated. Your physician or local health department will confirm the diagnosis and evaluate which drug would be most appropriate according to the individual and their circumstances.**

**Drugs used for treating Giardia include:**

<b>Quinacrine Hydrochloride</b>	<b>= Atabrine</b>
<b>Metronidazole</b>	<b>= Flagyl</b>
<b>Furazolidone</b>	<b>= Furozone</b>

**Relapses or treatment failure may occur with any drug**