

# Giardia

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## Overview

*Giardia* is a protozoan parasite found all over the world. It infects humans, many domestic animals and birds. *Giardia* lives in the intestinal tract and infection may be asymptomatic or can result in gastrointestinal symptoms. The most common signs are diarrhea, vomiting, weight loss and excessive gas.

*Giardia* infections (called Giardiasis) show no gender or breed predilection but are most common in young animals and in animals under close confinement, such as those in kennels, animal shelters and pet stores.

Most cases of *Giardia* infection in humans arise from person-to-person contact or from contaminated water, but animals do harbor strains of *Giardia* that are infectious to humans and animal-to-human transmission theoretically is possible.

## Diagnosis and Treatment Notes:

- *Giardia* is generally diagnosed by microscopic examination of a fresh fecal sample. In some cases a special fecal test (ELISA) can be performed.
- Treatment depends on the severity of the disease, your individual pet, and your veterinarian. The most common drug used to combat *Giardia* is metronidazole but fenbendazole or other medications can also work. Discuss treatment details when your pet is diagnosed with this condition.

## What to Watch for\*:

- Diarrhea
- Vomiting
- Weight loss
- Flatulence (excessive gas)

*\*Please notify us if you notice any of the above signs or if you have any questions!*