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NF94-163 Giardia lamblia

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NebFact

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Giardia lamblia

By Susan S. Sumner, Extension Food Microbiologist
Julie A. Albrecht, Extension Food Specialist

The Disease:	*Giardia lamblia* is a flagellate parasite. This parasite is largely confined to the lining of the intestine. Symptoms include diarrhea, abdominal cramps, fatigue, weight loss, gas, anorexia, and nausea and may persist for two to three months if untreated.
The Organism:	*Giardia lamblia* is a parasite which can colonize the lining of the intestine. *G. lamblia* can feed and grow in the intestine and is shed in the feces in a stable form called a cyst. The cyst cannot multiply outside the host.
Source:	Giardia cysts can be found in water, raw vegetables and feces of contaminated individuals. Giardiasis can be a problem in some institutions and day care centers where adequate sanitation may be difficult to maintain.
Control:	Measures to prevent transmission include proper disposal of feces, wastewater treatment, and filtration step before chlorination in the preparation of drinking water from surface water sources. Cooking kills the cysts in contaminated foods and boiling will make water safe for use.

File NF163 under FOOD AND NUTRITION
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