



## Giardiasis for Recreational Waters

Giardiasis is a diarrheal disease caused by the parasite Giardia. Giardia is moderately resistant to chlorine disinfection making it a concern in treated recreational waters, as well as naturally occurring recreational waters. Giardia infection rates increase in late summer, coinciding with the recreational water season. 23 cases of Giardiasis were reported at Navy MTFs in 2013.

### Infection

Symptoms of giardiasis normally begin 1 to 3 weeks after becoming infected and can last from 2 to 6 weeks. Giardia infection can cause a variety of intestinal symptoms, including diarrhea, stomach or abdominal cramps, and nausea. People who are in poor health or who have weakened immune systems are at higher risk for more severe and prolonged illness.



Photo from : CNIC Naval Air Station Jacksonville

### Prevention

At recreational water facilities early intervention is the best strategy. Giardia may be controlled by both environmental and behavioral interventions.

- Aquatics operators and managers should:
  - establish, implement, and enforce diarrhea-exclusion policies for patrons and staff.
  - develop a [fecal incident response plan](#) and train your staff on the response procedures.
- Installation medical treatment facility:
  - establish good communication and a strong working relationship with the aquatics operators and managers to ensure appropriate and timely response to crypto outbreak concerns.
- Patrons of recreational water venues should:
  - avoid swallowing water at recreational water facilities.
  - protect others by not swimming if experiencing diarrhea (especially children in diapers).
  - shower before entering the water.
  - wash children thoroughly with soap and water after diaper changing or toilet use.
  - take children on frequent bathroom breaks and check their diapers often. Diapers should be changed in the bathroom, not at the poolside.

❖ Adapted from the Centers for Disease Control Giardia webpage available from: <http://www.cdc.gov/parasites/giardia/>

**For more information, resources and tools on recreational waters:**

- ▶ Visit <http://www.med.navy.mil/sites/nmcphc/program-and-policy-support/swimming-pools-and-bathing-places/Pages/default.aspx>
- ▶ Contact your local Military Treatment Facility's Preventive Medicine office

