

GASTRO-INTESTINAL TRACT INFECTIONS

Giardiasis

Giardiasis is a parasitic infection often associated with recent foreign travel, particularly from South Asia.

It is acquired via the faecal-oral route; by contact with faeces of infected animals, after ingestion of contaminated food or drink, waterborne including swimming in contaminated water; or by sexual transmission.

The incubation period is usually 1 to 3 weeks but 7 days on average.

Symptoms include diarrhoea, malaise, abdominal pain, loss of appetite, flatulence, bloating, and rarely nausea. Malabsorption, weight loss, and faltering growth may occur in children.

Recurrent or refractory giardiasis occurs in 10-20% of patients.

Diagnosis is only made after a positive stool sample result.

Treatment:

Treat once an infection is confirmed and if a confirmed relapse occurs.

If the patient relapses, consider another course of therapy and investigation of the family who may be asymptomatic excretors.

Medicine ¹	Dosage	Duration
Metronidazole	Child under 1 year – contact paediatrics/microbiology for advice.	
	Child 1-2yrs: 500mg once daily 3-6yrs: 600-800mg once daily 7-9yrs: 1g once daily	3 days
	Adult and child ≥ 10yrs: 400mg three times a day Or 2g once daily (less well tolerated)	5 days 3 days
	Or 500mg twice a day	7-10 days
¹ See BNF for appropriate use and dosing in specific populations, for example, hepatic impairment or renal impairment, and in pregnancy and breastfeeding.		

Follow self-care and fluid intake advice ([CKS Gastroenteritis](#)).

This is a **notifiable disease** and must be reported (Report a notifiable disease - GOV.UK) .

If giardiasis is suspected or confirmed, the person should not go swimming for 2 weeks after the last episode of diarrhoea.