

# Pointers For Parents

## Danger In Diaperland: Giardiasis

(NAPSA)—When 16 people in Connecticut developed diarrhea and other distressing symptoms several days after eating the same salad at a picnic, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) determined they had giardiasis. The CDC tracked the source of the infection to a woman who had mixed the salad with her hands.

She had probably become a carrier of the infection when failing to wash her hands properly after diapering her child.

The infectious parasite that causes giardiasis, known as Giardia, can be picked up during diaper changing and from surfaces such as changing tables and diaper pails contaminated with the feces of an infected person.

The CDC estimates that up to 2.5 million cases of giardiasis occur annually in the United States. Day care centers are common sites of infection.

Everyone who comes in contact with a day care center—staff, parents and children—should wash their hands often because the infection is spread so easily.

Symptoms usually appear one to two weeks after a person has been infected and may include abdominal discomfort, bloating due to intestinal gas, flatulence and diarrhea.

These symptoms may last two to six weeks. If left untreated, symptoms may persist for months.

“Because giardiasis can be spread after swallowing only a small amount of contaminated material, hand washing is the single most effective way to prevent the spread of this highly contagious disease,” explains Dr.



**Washing your hands carefully after diapering a child can help prevent the spread of an infectious disease called giardiasis.**

Bradley A. Connor, medical director, The New York Center for Travel and Tropical Medicine and clinical associate professor of Medicine, Weill Medical College of Cornell University.

If you think you have giardiasis, tell your health care provider. By providing all the facts, you are more likely to receive a proper diagnosis and appropriate treatment. Several drugs are available to treat the infection, including Tindamax, a single-dose prescription therapy.

“Single-dose therapies have been shown to help patients take medication as prescribed, which is important when treating a condition like giardiasis,” says Dr. Connor.

Tindamax has been designated a drug of choice for the treatment of giardiasis by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Before giving any medication to a child, be sure to consult a health care professional.