



AMEBIASIS FACT SHEET

WHAT IS AMEBIASIS?

Amebiasis is an infection caused by the parasite, *Entamoeba histolytica*. The disease is most common in tropical or subtropical areas with poor sanitation. It typically takes 2 to 4 weeks to show the first signs of being ill after being exposed to the parasite.

HOW DO YOU GET AMEBIASIS?

- People can get amebiasis by consuming food or water contaminated with feces containing the parasite.
- People may also get this disease from ingesting the parasite after touching contaminated hands or surfaces.

SYMPTOMS

- Only 10-20% of people infected with amebiasis become sick from the infection.
- Symptoms may be mild and include diarrhea and stomach cramping. Severe infection may include bloody stools or fever.

TREATMENT

Several antibiotics are available to treat amebiasis. Discuss treatment options with your doctor.

PREVENTION

When traveling to a country with poor sanitary conditions:

- Drink bottled water, tap water that has been boiled for at least 1 minute, or carbonated water or soda
- Avoid fountain drinks or any drinks with ice cubes
- Avoid fresh fruit and vegetables that you did not peel yourself
- Avoid milk, cheese, or dairy products that may not have been pasteurized
- Avoid food or drinks sold by street vendors

SHOULD AN INFECTED PERSON BE EXCLUDED FROM WORK OR SCHOOL?

Any person who attends or works at a child care center or works in a sensitive occupation preparing/serving food or provides direct patient care shall be excluded and may return after diarrhea has ceased and three follow-up stool specimens are negative for amebiasis (Ohio Administrative Code 3701-3-13).

DPHD EFFORTS:

Reports of suspected and confirmed cases of disease are made to the Delaware Public Health District. The Health District investigates potential sources of illness, conducts surveillance for the spread of disease, and engages in community outreach and education.