



LEARN MORE GIARDIA

Water is an essential resource for life. Water is used by everyone, every day. Not only do we need drinking water to survive, but water plays an important role in almost every aspect of our lives, from recreation to performing medical procedures. When water becomes contaminated by parasites, it can cause a variety of illnesses.

Contaminated water is a serious problem that can cause severe pain & disability. Common water-related diseases caused by parasites include Guinea worm, schistosomiasis, amebiasis, cryptosporidiosis (Crypto), and giardiasis.

People become infected with these diseases when they swallow or have contact with water that has been contaminated by certain parasites. For example, drinking water contaminated with fecal matter containing the amoeba *Entamoeba histolytica* can get amebic dysentery (amebiasis). An individual can get Guinea worm disease when they drink water that contains the parasite *Dracunculus medinensis*. If an infected person with an open Guinea worm wound enters a pond or well used for drinking water, they can spread the parasite into the water and continue the cycle of contamination and infection. Schistosomiasis can be spread when people swim in or have contact with freshwater lakes that are contaminated with *Schistosoma* parasites.

Parasites are also a cause of waterborne disease. Water can become contaminated with parasites and cause illness. Recreational water illnesses are diseases that are spread by swallowing, breathing, or having contact with contaminated water from swimming pools, hot tubs, lakes, rivers, or the ocean.

The most commonly reported is diarrhea caused by parasites, such as *Cryptosporidium* and *Giardia intestinalis*. *Giardia intestinalis* is also a common parasite found in drinking water.

Both *Cryptosporidium* and *Giardia intestinalis* are found in the fecal matter of an infected person or animal. Proper sanitation and hygiene are also essential to preventing waterborne illness. Access to clean and safe water through a variety of programs and projects.