

DEXTER'S DELI

PET HEALTH GUIDE

Ref. 20 v.11



GIARDIA

Yes it's gross to talk about poop but we want you to be informed pet owners! We've been hearing from too many customers that their dogs have giardia, picking it up at local dog recreation areas or daycares, especially during winter months. We've also seen puppies coming to their new homes already infected.

Symptoms

- Diarrhea
- Inability to Gain Weight
- Stomach Distress
- Lack of Appetite
- Foul Breath
- Symptoms come & go

Product Suggestions

- Sustenance Herbs Giard-Ex
- Four Leaf Rover *Saccharomyces boulardii*
- Coconut Oil
- Herbal Energetics Pet Boost
- Sustenance Herbs Immune Mushroom Blend
- Four Leaf Rover Colostrum

Saccharomyces boulardii is shown to be effective against giardia with or without antibiotics, and is one of the only probiotics that is generally effective *during* antibiotic use, so don't hesitate to use it if you have concerns. If using it with antibiotics give it two hours away from the time you give the antibiotics.

Giardia is a protozoa that lives in the intestines of affected animals. It's *not* rare, but not all animals actually get sick from it. It's easily spread through contaminated water, and can live in damp environments for quite some time. Animals can also pass it to each other.

Testing. It's not always evident in "fecal float" tests which look for cysts that aren't always being shed in the feces (leading to false negatives), so it's recommended to test for antigens using ELISA or PCR testing (an Antigen Diarrhea Panel), especially if symptoms persist. Retest after treatment to confirm (float tests at first, then antigen test if clear after 3-6 months).

The main symptom is diarrhea. It may come and go, be of varying quality, and may look greasy. If you've been changing foods thinking it was a food allergy but your pet still has diarrhea, it may be giardia. Diarrhea combined with an inability to gain weight is likely giardia. Persistent giardia can also cause lack of appetite, stomach distress, and foul breath. Untreated giardiasis can lead to intestinal scarring and susceptibility to other diseases. Be aware that the drug commonly prescribed to treat giardia (Metronidazole) also decimates the microbiome of the gut, so care must be taken to use only if necessary (fenbendazole is preferred in that case), and to actively restore the microbiome during and after use.

A weakened immune system contributes to the growth of giardia. This is why some dogs are unaffected while others are terribly ill. The immune system can be weakened by stress, poor intestinal health (lack of beneficial bacteria), a processed food diet, other health issues, and some medications (including some used to treat giardia)

Natural supplements can prevent and treat most cases of giardia when used correctly and consistently. Use a combination of these if you suspect giardia or have a diagnosis, and as prevention for other pets in your household if you have one pet with giardia.

- **Probiotic:** Four Leaf Rover *Saccharomyces boulardii* (use with or without antibiotics)
- **Anti-Parasitics:** Sustenance Herbs Giard-Ex (for dogs only), coconut oil
- **Immune Enhancing Herbs:** Sustenance Herbs Immune/Mushroom Blend, Herbal Energetics Pet Boost, Colostrum
- **Low-Starch, Fresh-Food Diet:** Gently cooked, low-fat at first for infected pets (giardia inhibits lipase), best to start with simple meals that include bone broth and vegetables.

Don't just treat your pet's body - deal with the environment too.

- Avoid parks (especially dog parks) and freshwater recreation areas until your dog's infestation is resolved. Don't spread it around! No shared water until testing is clear.
- Clean repeatedly during infestation/treatment. Use soap and hot water for floors, bedding, bowls, grooming equipment, etc. Bathe your dog. Clean up feces immediately and dispose of them in plastic bags. While we don't normally recommend the use of chlorine bleach, a 1:32 dilution kills giardia cysts quickly.
- The best long-term defense is dryness and heat, so let your yard and patio dry out. If your landscaped areas are always cold & damp they may continue to harbor giardia.

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