

**The University of Tennessee
Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee
Occupational Health Program**

GIARDIASIS

People at Risk: *Giardia lamblia* is an intestinal protozoal parasite. Many species of animals both wild and domestic can harbor it. The laboratory animals that most often have *G. Lamblia* are dogs, cats, and non-human primates. Any animal worker who has contact with these species may be at risk for contracting *Giardia*.

Transmission: *G. Lamblia* is shed in the feces of infected animals and could be transferred to people by ingestion of infective cysts. This might occur if the workers' hands become contaminated and are not washed afterwards or if fecal material is aerosolized.

Symptoms: The typical signs of giardiasis are loss of appetite, nausea, abdominal cramps, bloating, and diarrhea.

Diagnosis and Prevention:

Giardiasis is diagnosed by examining a fresh stool sample for the parasite. Routine screening of animals for giardiasis and treatment when found, along with good personal hygiene (e.g. frequent hand washing) reduces the risk of transmission to people.