



1. What is amebiasis?

Amebiasis (am-e-BY-a-sis) is an infection of the intestine caused by a parasite (an organism living in or on another organism).

2. How do you get amebiasis?

You can get amebiasis by:

- Eating contaminated food
- Drinking contaminated water
- Being exposed to human stool through sexual contact
- Touching your mouth with contaminated hands

Anyone can get amebiasis, but it is most common in tropical areas that have poor sanitary conditions. People who live in or travel to places where water or food quality is poor may develop the disease.

3. How do you know if you have amebiasis?

Many people infected with amebiasis do not have symptoms. Two out of ten people with the disease will become sick and usually develop symptoms within two to four weeks. The most common symptoms of amebiasis include:

- Loose stools
- Stomach pain
- Stomach cramping
- Bloody stools
- Fever

See your doctor if you have any of these symptoms.

4. How is amebiasis treated?

Treatment for amebiasis may include taking medication. If you think you may have amebiasis, please see your doctor. Specific treatment will vary from person to person.

5. How can amebiasis be prevented?

To prevent spreading the infection, every member of the household should wash their hands with soap and clean water often, especially at these times:

- Before eating or preparing food
- After using the bathroom or changing diapers
- After handling pets or animals

6. What other information do I need to know about amebiasis?

- Children who attend day care centers must be kept at home if they have diarrhea.
- If household members develop symptoms, they should be tested for amebiasis.
- Food employees who are infected must not work until they are on appropriate medication and they have received clearance from their doctor.
- Take precaution with food and water when traveling to countries with poor sanitation.

Sources

1. *Amebiasis*. L.A. Department of Public Health. <http://www.lapublichealth.org/acd/>
2. *Amebiasis*. California Department of Public Health. www.cdph.ca.gov/healthinfo
3. *Amebiasis*. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. www.cdc.gov/diseasesconditions

For additional resources, please visit the L.A. County Department of Public Health website <http://publichealth.lacounty.gov>.