

BEAVER FEVER FACTS AND PREVENTION

What: Beaver Fever is an intestinal Bowel disease caused by a microscopic parasite called *Giardia lamblia*. It is a common illness that causes diarrhea (loose stool/poop). Over 2,000 cases occur in New York State each year. People who contract Beaver Fever normally recover without any intervention within a week. Though very rare, we have had diagnosed cases over the past decades on Lake Muskoday and Tennanah Lake. Our resident Beavers are probably a contributing factor, but we can't point the finger solely at them.

Where: Beaver Fever is transmitted through untreated water containing the parasite that is ingested willingly or by accident. The parasite can also be passed through human-to-human contact via unwashed hands and sewerage. Drinking untreated spring water, ingesting lake water and being in close human contact (e.g. daycare centers) are all risk factors for Beaver Fever.

Who: Though the common name is Beaver Fever, all animals, including humans, can carry and transmit the parasite. Kids are vulnerable to the illness, mostly because they have a great time in the water and are prone to accidentally ingesting untreated water. It is also common in human venues where handwashing may not be thorough.

Symptoms: People exposed to *Giardia* may experience mild or severe diarrhea (loose stool/poop), gas, stomach cramps, nausea (a feeling of upset in the stomach), or dehydration (loss of water in the body causing weakness or dizziness). Some people experience no symptoms at all. Fever is rarely present. Occasionally, some people will have chronic diarrhea over several weeks or months, with significant weight loss. The symptoms may appear from 3 to 25 days after exposure but usually within 10 days.

Treatment: Giardiasis is diagnosed by testing samples of your stool (poop) and it is treated by prescribing antibiotics such as metronidazole, tinidazole, or nitazoxanide. However, many individuals may recover on their own in a few weeks without medication.

Prevention: Do not drink untreated surface water (e.g. lake, streams or springs). Maintain your septic system and address issues promptly. Wash hands immediately after swimming in lakes or stream. Do not ingest lake water while swimming.

GOOSE TRANSMITTED DISEASES AND PREVENTION

It is important to be aware of the diseases geese may transmit. A goose can produce 1.5 pounds of feces per day, and we encounter it as we swim, clean off docks and walk on grassy areas.

What: Canada Geese can carry parasites and bacteria. ***Bacteria*** come in the form of chlamydiosis, e-coli, listeria, pasteurella multocida and salmonella. There are three ways geese shed these bacteria: feces (poop), nasal discharge and biting. The types of ***parasites*** that geese can carry are cryptosporidium, giardia and toxoplasmosis. The symptoms from these parasites include diarrhea and infection. Parasites are transmitted through drinking or accidentally ingesting (e.g. swimming in) contaminated water and through direct contact with their poop.

Prevention: Do not drink untreated surface water. If you are cleaning off goose poop, wear a mask and gloves and wash your hands afterward. If you or your pet has been walking in an area with goose poop, wash hands and paws (and feet if barefoot), and your shoes before entering the house.

Questions? Contact LMHA Ecology Chair Carol Sommerfield, carol.sommerfield@gmail.com.