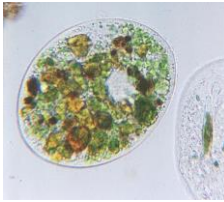


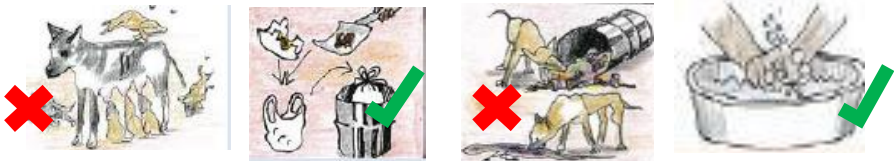


Zoonoses Fact Sheet: Giardia

<p>What is <i>Giardia</i>?</p> <p>Where does it live?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Giardia</i> is a protozoa that can cause stomach upsets and diarrhoea. • <i>Giardia</i> has two forms in its life: a cyst form and an adult form. It begins life wrapped up in a cyst, a bit like a tiny egg. This cyst stage lets the <i>Giardia</i> live for a longer time in the environment. The cyst can live much longer in a wet environment than a dry one. The adult hatches from the cyst and lives in the gut. • There are many different types of <i>Giardia</i>, some belonging to wildlife, some to livestock, and some to humans. • <i>Giardia duodenalis</i> is also called <i>Giardia lambia</i> and <i>Giardia intestinalis</i> – these are all the same germ. 	<p>What are Protozoa?</p> <p>Protozoa are a family of organisms larger than bacteria, but are still microscopic. They need to get inside another animal before they can breed up. Protozoa that can cause gut diseases include <i>Giardia</i>, <i>Isospora</i> and <i>Cryptosporidium</i></p> 
<p>How does <i>Giardia</i> make people sick?</p>	 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Giardia</i> can be in the gut of people or dogs and not make them sick. • If a person or dog has a weak immune system <i>Giardia</i> can make them very sick. • Young <i>Giardia</i> breed up inside the gut of people and animals. • <i>Giardia</i> can cause diarrhoea and stomach upsets (gut ache). • Antibiotics don't work well on them. This makes <i>Giardia</i> a difficult to disease to treat. That's why preventing it is important. 	
<p>Where do we find <i>Giardia</i>?</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Giardia</i> is most common where human or animal faeces can get into the water. • Dogs that drink from surface water or those that eat nappies (kimbes) or rubbish can get infected, pass cysts in their faeces, and continue the cycle of disease. • Dogs lying outside can get <i>Giardia</i> cysts on their coats, which can then get onto people's hands when they touch dogs. 	
<p>How can we stop the spread of <i>Giardia</i>?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ask DHP to fix dripping taps, boggy areas in yards, drainage, and rubbish collection. • Raise awareness of the risks of inadequate hygiene (understanding of germ theory, importance of hand washing, house cleaning, and removal of dog faeces from yards). • Provide and fill drinking containers for dogs so they have a clean water source • Improve general dog health: sick animals always have more germs in their faeces • Reduce dog breeding: younger dogs produce more germs in their faeces 	

Sources: Dr Sam Phelan, Dog Health Programs in Indigenous communities, an Environmental Health Practitioner's Guide, AMRRIC, 2010

Professor Richard Speare, Human Doctor and Veterinarian, James Cook University, Zoonoses training at QLD Health/AMRRIC Workshops, Yarrabah, 2008

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