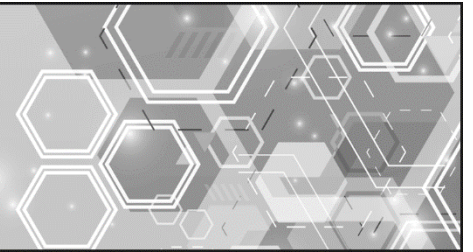




## Durham Region Health Department **Facts about...**



# Amebiasis

## What is it?

Amebiasis is a gastrointestinal illness caused by a microscopic parasite called *Entamoeba histolytica*. It is found throughout the world but is more common in areas with poor sanitation.

Amebiasis is a disease of public health significance and must be reported to the Health Department.

## How is it spread?

When you become infected, the parasites stay in your intestines even if you do not feel sick. As long as you have the parasite, it will be in your feces. If you do not wash your hands after using the washroom or changing a diaper, you can spread to others by touch or handling food. You can also get it from drinking water and eating foods that have the parasite, or sexually by anal-oral contact.

## What do I look for?

You may start to feel sick within a few days to several months or years, but usually about 2-4 weeks after the parasite enters your body. You may have fever, chills and diarrhea (with blood or mucus) or milder symptoms such as stomach pain with diarrhea (with blood or mucus), interchanging with times where you are constipated or feel better.

## How is it treated?

Amebiasis should be treated with medications. There are several drugs that your doctor can prescribe. See your doctor for treatment advice.

## How can I protect myself?

- Wash your hands well, with warm running water and soap, rubbing together for at least 15 seconds, after using the washroom, changing diapers, before eating and preparing foods.
- Wash all fruits and vegetables with safe water before you eat them.

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- Always drink water from a safe supply. Treatment of drinking water will control the spread; however, chlorine disinfection alone will not get rid of it, you may need specific filters. Consult with your water treatment specialist.
- If you have the illness, do not make food for other people until you feel better for at least 24 hours.
- Make sure you use protection if you have anal-oral sex. Wash your hands right after touching the anal area.

## **More information can be obtained from**

Durham Health Connection Line 905-668-2020 or 1-800-841-2729

July 22, 2026

905-668-2020 or 1-800-841-2729 | [durham.ca/health](https://durham.ca/health)

If you require this information in an accessible format, contact 1-800-841-2729.

